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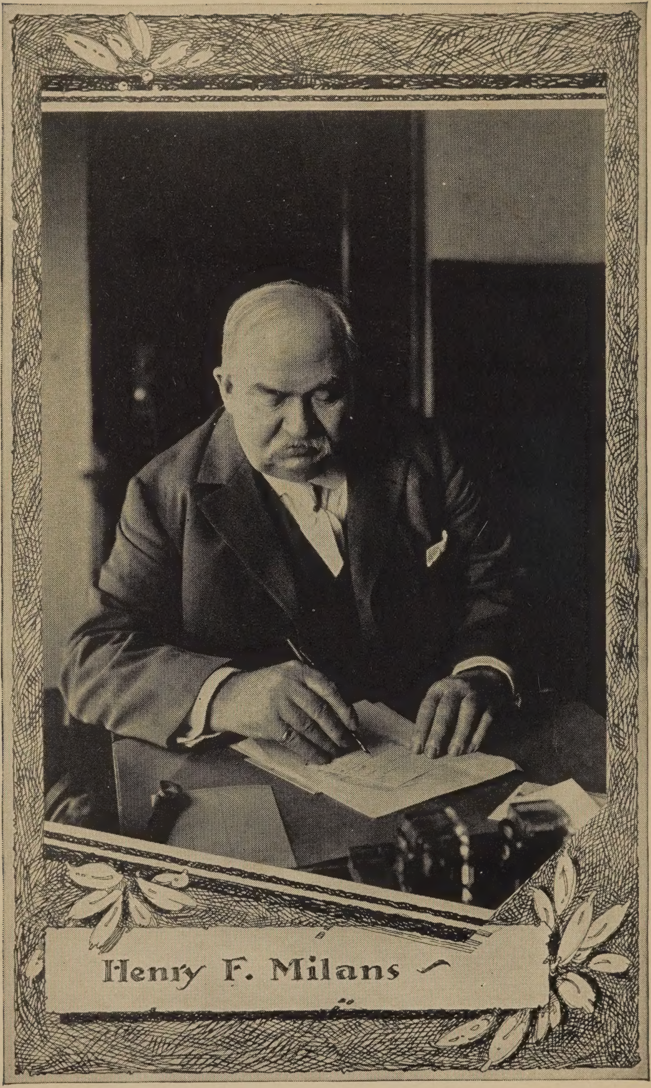
THE LIFE-STORY OF HENRY F. MILANS



Henry F. Milans

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OUT OF THE DEPTHS

THE LIFE-STORY OF HENRY F. MILANS

BY

ENSIGN CLARENCE W. HALL

FOREWORD BY

EVANGELINE C. BOOTH

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, UNITED STATES FORCES
OF THE SALVATION ARMY

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FOREWORD

BY COMMANDER EVANGELINE C. BOOTH

> *"I learn the depth to which I have sunk, from the length of the chain let down to updraw me. I ascertain the mightiness of the ruin, by examining the machinery for restoration."*
>
> —HENRY MELVILLE.

THIS moving story of a human life, in tragedy and in triumph, is presented, not because it will make a strong appeal to sentiment, and stir deep emotions, but because it is true.

The true scientist welcomes truth from every quarter. Here is the greatest truth of all: *God saves man.* Let scepticism itself read these pages and try to deny such evidence. No scepticism is possible except the scepticism of insincerity.

At Bellevue Hospital in New York, a man, a victim of drink, his body broken, his mind enfeebled, his character destroyed, his soul lost, by his last friend forsaken, humanly speaking without remedy, without hope, was declared publicly by the most authoritative physicians of the day to be a hopelessly incurable alcoholic, whose only prospect was an early death by drink. On this man medical science said its last word.

In the streets of New York, these mere ashes of a man were picked up by the Salvation Army. Our officers may not be scientists, but, as proved in a multitude of cases, they wield a power which surpasses all science. They surrounded the man, body, mind and soul, with the Love of God. And the Love of God is Omnipotence.

Point blank, science was challenged by faith. Were the scientists right in saying that the man could not be saved, or was he to be saved despite this verdict?

It was veritably a trial by fire. At the penitent form, there was a terrible struggle. But the sacrifice on Calvary of Him who came to seek and to save that which was lost, was the victory. The man—I knew him well—was released from his bondage, restored to his family, re-established in business, and became the saviour of countless others whose wrecked lives were as hopeless as his own.

We have only admiration for science. We fully recognize the wondrous discoveries and inventions of uplift and helpfulness that human knowledge and scientific research have given to the world. We praise God for them. But we do contend that the efficiency which comes of knowledge has not superseded the gospel which is all victorious in Divine Love.

The limit of men's power is to breathe into our brain the message of their mind; this Christ breathes into our soul the essence of Himself. He passes like a flame through our nature and leaves us glowing with spiritual vitality. This we have proved in numerous cases, as in the story of this book. Religion awakens faculties long since dead; opens eyes to the beholding of things more wondrous than shining worlds can tell, or knowledge ever reveal. The lights of intellect, of learning, of science, fade out like feeble stars in the glory of this new light. It is in this gospel that we glory, for it is the power of God unto salvation.

The puny streams at which this man sought to slake the thirst of his parched soul were forgotten in the infinite sea of life all about him. Broken reeds, that left him bruised for the leaning, were discarded for that unshortened Hand that lifted him from the awful depth into which he had fallen, high above all sin and all sin's sorrow.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

"DO you believe in miracles?" It was a sceptic who recently asked the question of Henry F. Milans.

"With all my soul, *I'm one!*"

That answer gave the title to this biography.

The virility of Christianity as a religion, surrounded and challenged by a score of other religions, stands or falls with its ability or inability to perform miracles in the lives of its adherents.

We go even further, and say that the miracle is one of the greatest and most convincing arguments which Christianity possesses. Statements of belief are not proofs; creeds cannot be brought in as evidence. Morality has certain powers, education can accomplish much; but the religion that wins must be more than a code of ethics, or an accumulation of creeds, or abstract statements.

The results of sin are everywhere apparent. Men and women whom we see every day confess that they are the victims of the enslaving power of evil habit, whose chains they cannot of themselves break. And before such a condition of things every human agency stands, admittedly helpless. *A miracle is required.* And human powers do no miracles.

Pseudo-scientists speak glibly of the "miracles of science" in trying to belittle the claims of Christianity. But these so-called miracles are simply discoveries—wonderful discoveries, it is true, but only discoveries nonetheless—that are found to be thoroughly in line with natural laws. The real scientist never refers to his findings as "miracles." For science does no miracle.

Horace warns the tragedian not to bring a god on the stage unless there is an entanglement worthy of a god. Sin has tangled, desperately tangled, the lives of men. Human powers have sought to straighten things out, but have succeeded only in adding to the confusion of knots. Here is a situation that calls for Divine interference.

We need a miracle!

And we need one *today*. It is not enough that Moses brought water from a rock, or that the sun stood still at Joshua's command, or that the Red Sea divided, or that Elijah went to Heaven in a chariot of fire. Nor is it enough that Jesus made the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the lame to walk, the graves to open, the Magdalene pure and the sinful to sin no more. For an up-to-date age we must have an up-to-date example of God's power. We insist that His Power is unchanging. But is it? What proof have we to offer to our modern Thomases to whom eyesight and finger-touch are essential to belief?

Is the day of miracles past? Must we be forever pointing to past ages for the evidence of our faith? Has Christianity grown impotent with age? In the long battle with sin has the religion of our fathers become tottering, senile, decrepit . . . an enfeebled and pitiful maladroit on the battlefield of life? Has Christianity, weighed in the balances of modernity, been found wanting?

Not a few would answer "yes" to those questions, and it would be the honest expression of their conviction.

In the minds of many thinking persons there is a residuum of prosaic matter-of-factness, of a need to touch and to see, which verbal proofs can never quite satisfy. In recognizing that, are we arriving at the cause of the unattractiveness of the Christian church today? Perhaps in trying to be human enough, we have become insufficiently divine. A religion robbed of the supernatural element is an insipid thing. Spineless Christianity, untouched by any sign of divinity, will not attract many adherents.

Today must be the day of miracles!

General William Booth doubtless was wiser than many give him credit for in urging his officers to "Go for the worst!" The surest way to prove a religion's efficacy is to try it on the impossibles, the incurables. If it works with them, it will work with any.

So, while clever and learned preachers ascend high pulpits to expound delightful aphorisms and frozen abstractions to empty pews, little groups of Salvationists stand on the street corners of the world and above the roar and rattle of traffic sing "There is Power, *wonder-working Power,* in the Blood" to sizable groups of hungry humanity. Their dependence is not on sheepskins or certificates. Their authority is the human miracle of redemption, once saved at the drum-head or altar-rail, and now standing forth to tell how it happened . . . his logic the compelling logic of a changed life.

That the day of miracles is not past, we offer as Twentieth Century evidence this biography of Henry F. Milans.

Biographies, as a rule, are stories of dignified achievement. If there have been faults and sins—and, be it said, it would be difficult to discover a life without these—they are carefully hidden behind a smoke screen of praise for worthy deeds. But in order to illustrate the depths to which God's power will go, this story tells of sin's ravages as well as of God's renewings.

No attempt shall be made, however, to parade lurid details of underworld life, after the manner of "confession" stories, for the entertainment of the simply curious.

It is possible to make a story of this kind so vivid that it will defeat its own purposes. Distrust and loathing may be aroused rather than belief and faith.

The reader will readily understand what it means to the subject of this biography to have his life thus exploited. He is now a successful business man. He has hundreds of friends and business associates who have no idea that he has ever been other than he is now . . . clean, respected, successful. His life before conversion may be extremely interesting to us, but to him it is something he would gladly forget. It is a dreadful nightmare which he consented to give out to the world solely because he believes it may help, bless, or strengthen someone.

We repeat, this is a story of a *miracle.* And sin is no miracle. There's nothing remarkable about degradation, nothing captivating about filth. The re-birth and re-making of Henry F. Milans by a loving God is far more important than the depths to which he sank. To the majority of persons there is much more attraction in love and sunshine and happiness and decency than there is in the moral blackness and hidden depravity to which men and women are capable of sinking. In salvation lies the miracle . . . and, we believe, the greater interest.

The author has tried to tell this great story in all its wonderful simplicity. In it is not a line of fiction. Though overcome at times with the irresistible romance of his subject, and pleading guilty to an oft-recurring temptation to surrender to extravagances of a troublesome imagination (it is human nature to want to help out the marvellous), the temptation to fictionize has been successfully overcome.

And, altogether apart from the way in which it is written—poor at best—we believe the reader will find this story even more interesting than fiction. The narrator of fiction would be clever indeed to conceive a plot whose situations possess more of romance, pathos and tragedy than does this story drawn from actual life.

The life of Henry F. Milans is a life of extremes, and in extremes is interest. We hear of few lives that have so compassed the dimensions of human experience as does this one.

Most lives, if traced with chalk on a chart, would describe, more or less, a straight line. With the exception of a steady progress upward or downward, the chalk would move mainly on the level. But this life's line would start at the bottom of the chart, go up at rather a steep angle, hover there for a time, and then drop down—almost straight down to far below its starting point. Then it would rise again steadily, steadily, more slowly, but steadily and without variation, until it reached the top—and continue on and on, never again wavering for a fraction of an inch.

This story is not intended as a preachment; we tire of sermons. Nor is it set forth as the affirmative side of a debate, argument is often futile. It is first and last a *testimony*. And just as there is no sermon so virile, no argument so convincing as the living, pulsating embodiment of a thing, so we offer just the facts of the miracle itself.

Let it be remembered that Henry F. Milans is now a miracle of twenty years' standing. His experience has stood the test of the years. He has outgrown the swaddling clothes of the novice and has passed through the adolescence of the probate. He has attained his Christian maturity.

He is of age. What better then, that his experience be allowed to speak for itself?

C. W. H.

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I

ONE OF GOD'S MOTHERS

JANUARY 5, 1861. So said the calendar. In New Bloomfield, Pennsylvania, the impending Civil War was casting its shadows ahead. About the courthouse, men gathered in little groups to argue excitedly on states' rights, Abraham Lincoln, slavery. At home, women, with the readier apprehension of their sex, sensed even more keenly than did the men the terrors ahead. Wives of husbands and mothers of sons glanced anxiously through the newspapers discarded by their menfolk, and went to bed to face nightmares of torn bodies and gaping wounds.

A war was being born. All were conscious of that fact. Events were daily bringing them closer to a great national disruption—a tremendous conflict of broken bodies and broken hearts. Were not the politicians on every hand declaring that war was inevitable? And the issue, said they, was slavery. Slavery of the body. Men should be free.

But at the same hour that the very air was rife with talk and trepidation, there was a household in New Bloomfield to which wars and rumors of wars were distant things. Its members were not concerned with outside affairs just then. For them a more momentous event was taking place.

Henry F. Milans was making his entrance into this world!

For those who have a liking for coincidence, it may be interesting to note the time of Henry Milans' birth.

It does seem that he happened to be born at a time which may be strikingly paralleled with the events of his life. His life was destined to be torn by internal conflict. His whole being was to become a battleground on which the physical and spiritual forces waged a civil war that for duration, intensity of battle, subtle strategy of the enemy, seeming defeat, and final triumphant victory is not to be surpassed on any page of any history of any age.

And the issue was to be slavery. Slavery of the soul.

* * *

The birth-place of young Henry, stated quickly, does not seem very impressive. In his public addresses he has often said, humorously, "I got a bad start in life. You see I was born in jail!"

But before the statement has time to astonish, let it be said that his birth in this place was perfectly proper, inasmuch as his father, Henry G. Milans, then held a position which carried more dignity and honour than it now does. He was the County Jailor.

This position of jailor had been given to the father as a political award.

At the time of young Henry's birth he was a promising young lawyer, a big man in the little village. Bright of intellect, with the ability to grasp law readily, doubtless he would have become one of that section's outstanding citizens had he been content to remain in New Bloomfield. An old judge, a resident of the little town, once declared that the county files were full of case records which prove Father Milans' dexterity in the legal profession.

But, though clever at jurisprudence, the head of the Milans family was never able to learn the art of winning the confidence and warm affection of his children. Reserved and austere, he seemed to regard it as undignified to join in their play. His appearance in the home engendered an atmosphere of strict decorum. He was a man of erect carriage and serious mien. Life for him was a grave thing not to be passed in frivolity, even amongst children. At sight of his figure entering the front gate, all childish play and prattle would cease, or move out to more friendly quarters. This attitude of dignity and reserve was not of his own manufacture. It was his by nature—a nature which was in later years to cause him heartache.

* * *

Mother Milans, however, more than made up for the father's deficiencies in this respect. Whatever of affection and companionship the children failed to find in him, they got in double measure from her.

Although a simple woman, Mother Milans was powerful in her simplicity. Education of the type that begets diplomas and bookish knowledge was not hers. She knew but one Book, but she knew that one well. In the Bible she found a knowledge of art—the art of correct living. It gave her philosophy—the philosophy of a loving heart which beat in sympathy with humanity. It drilled her in music—the music of a glad spirit. It instructed her in economics—the economy that discovers that "Godliness with contentment is great gain." It taught her psychology—the blessed psychology of the "mind that is stayed on Thee." Though lacking book learning, she was wise, for she lived near to the Fount of all wisdom.

It would be impossible to tell the complete story of Henry Milans without relating a great deal about his mother. Indeed, one sometimes wonders which is the bigger, the story of his miraculous conversion or the story of her wonderful life, her prevailing prayer, her victorious faith. Throughout her life she was to reveal herself as one of God's great mothers.

With the birth of young Henry, Mother Milans felt that her ambitions in child-bearing were realized. Long had she wanted an exceptional child whom she could dedicate to God's service. And in this fine, lusty fellow she saw an answer to her desire. It is not too much to say that she, with a heart that loved every one of her eight children, loved this youngest best of all.

He was her finest, and she would give her finest to God. So, one day, kneeling beside the cradle which held the sleeping little body, she dedicated him with the prayer that he might become a great man of God. Little did she then realize the roundabout road that he was to travel before her prayer was answered. God wisely keeps from us the sight of our shattered dreams that tomorrow sometimes brings. But Mother Milans was to exemplify the truth in Holmes' verse:

"Youth fades, love droops,
The leaves of friendship fall;
A mother's secret hope outlives—
Outlives them all!"

And in time, God's own time, her hope was not only to wear the garb of longevity, it was also to be crowned with triumph.

* * *

When the Civil War broke out, the father went to take his part in the conflict. Mother Milans was left in charge of the jail. In addition to the cares of family, she was now shouldered with the responsibility of caring for a jail full of prisoners, many of whom were deserters and the like, none too amenable at first to the idea of being locked up, and that under a woman jailor.

But the hardest of them was not long in responding to her mother touch. Mothering in all its fine and noble meanings, was natural with her. She was kind to them, gave them good food, and so far as was right and proper tried to make their stay there comfortable. And the prisoners were quick to sense the fact that of all prisoners they were the most fortunate. She allowed her prisoners a certain amount of liberty, and at no time was advantage taken of the privileges given in attempts to escape. Only once was she attacked by a prisoner, and the poor wretch was nearly killed by the other prisoners for his act.

Her confidence in her prisoners and their love for her and the children is further illustrated by the fact that she often trusted her children to the care of some of the women prisoners. The modern mother would shrink at the suggestion of allowing her babes to come into contact with habitues of a jail. But Mother Milans was wise in this. She knew of the sanctifying power of a little child's presence and realized that no woman with a spark of womanhood left in her could but benefit from the assignment of caring for a sweet, innocent child. She was right. The children were none the worse for the arrangement, the women were uplifted, and Mother Milans was relieved of much of the burden and cares of looking after the children.

Now, the most spectacular of things invariably have come to Henry F. Milans. So, instead of being looked after in his infant days by just an ordinary prisoner, his nurse was no less than a murderess! This woman, though vicious enough (or courageous enough, according to the individual viewpoint) to slay a worthless husband, loved babies passionately. So Mother Milans would allow her to come out from the cell block (there were no death cells in that jail) in the daytime to care for and nurse young Henry. She continued in this capacity until the day before she forfeited her life on the gallows in payment for her crime.

The picture of Mother Milans at this period is a study in worthy womanhood. Carrying a burden of responsibility that would have broken down many a strong man, labouring from early morn till late at night in the jail, then cooking and sewing and mending for her family in the small hours, managing in some way to essay the double role of wage-earner and home-maker . . . such a woman is a sight to make proud the boaster of any nation's assets. All through the war she kept her brood together, made her home cheerful and attractive, and influenced her children toward religion and the formation of noble character.

* * *

Then came the end of the war. And fast on the heels of the great news came a letter from Father Milans saying that he was soon to be mustered out in Washington. He was not coming back to New Bloomfield. The place was too small. The great city of Washington was full of opportunities for young and able lawyers. He could see a great future for himself there. In a few days he would send transportation for the family.

And with the Milans family the excitement of war's end was nothing compared with the prospect of moving to the great Capital City of America!

II

IMPROVING ON DEVILTRY

MORE than three score years have been unable to erase from the mind of Henry F. Milans the most insignificant detail of that trip from New Bloomfield to Washington.

The journey required a day and a half. Today it is made in four hours or less. Train travel in 1865, under the best of conditions, was not a thing to be anticipated with delight. To Mother Milans with her brood of eight, the experience must have been like a long, bad dream—filled with cinders, dust, crying children, stale lunches and a constant succession of jolts. Then, as if to add to the usual discomforts, this train carried a large number of wounded soldiers to whom the jerking, bumping, snail-pace journey was anything but a joy ride, and whose groaning protests made no helpful contribution to the conglomerate noises of this section of weary, travelling humanity.

Let the modern mother, thinking herself cruelly martyred at having to travel with one or two children, take a look at this Milans exodus of the good year 1865, and be content with fast trains, Pullman accommodations, diners, and observation cars.

Yet, however much discomfort the trip may have brought to others, it was the great adventure for little four-year-old Henry. He scampered up and down the aisle of the swaying coach, making acquaintances, talking to all, rubbing the cinders farther in his eyes with knuckled fist, and imagining himself quite a globe trotter.

* * *

The arrival in Washington was no less exciting. The most vivid of youthful imaginations, possessed of a "soldier-boy" complex, could not have conceived a more desirable setting than that afforded by Washington at this time. The city was in the midst of the Grand Review of the Army of the Potomac, and was playing host to hundreds of thousands of the military great and small.

Marching soldiers and waving banners, blaring bands and bayoneted guns, tolling bells and booming cannon—all this set Henry's little heart afire. He was too young to understand what it was all about but his soul blazed in response to it.

Perhaps, after all, we who would lead small boys to Heaven make a grave mistake in picturing it as a restful land of gentle seraphim, chubby cherubim, white-whiskered prophets and golden streets. It is not at all unlikely that we should get better results if we suggested such rewards as braided uniforms, shining muskets and burnished trombones. At any rate, this Washington of military pomp and circumstance represented an attractive Heaven to the wide-awake Milans youngster.

The Milans family arrived in Washington just two days before the assassination of Lincoln. Father Milans had rented a floor in a house on Pennsylvania Avenue between Eighth and Ninth Streets. In the hysteria following the shooting of the President, little Henry in some way eluded his mother and ran to where the crowd was milling before Ford's Theatre. Pushing his way between what seemed to be a forest of trouser legs and skirts, he finally came to the very front of the pressing throng where his heroes, the soldiers, were endeavouring to keep order.

Seeing the little fellow climbing on a fence to look over the heads of the pushing grown-ups, a soldier lifted him to a seat of vantage on the fence. Here he was able to feast his soul on excitement, that is, until he suddenly lost his balance and slipped. In the slide down, the seat of his pants did its best to check the fall of their venturesome wearer, which resulted in his having to be disengaged by his friend the soldier, and treated by a surgeon in the nether parts of his anatomy.

* * *

Though these and successive days were exciting ones for Henry, they were disappointing to his father. The harder Father Milans tried to work up a practice in Washington the more his friends realized that he was a total loss there. The cleverness and brilliance that had helped him to make an important splash in the affairs of New Bloomfield brought him no recognition in the national center. The pool was too large; he was swamped by lawyers more experienced and better educated. Although he was able to obtain some work with the Government which kept his family from knowing destitution, his failure in his preferred profession depressed him. And he drew even further into his shell of taciturnity.

The children noted their father's depression, and avoided him even more than before.

Meanwhile Henry and his mother were melting into a companionship and understanding unusual between mother and child. She was his trusted confidante. Romping in from play, he would toss his cap into a corner and run to her lap to cuddle his little head in her expansive bosom and recite the day's adventures. To her he would bring all his childish ambitions, perplexities and problems. She would rest her cheek upon his heated brow; soothe him, advise him, and discuss his little affairs with him as though he were a grown-up.

This partnership lasted and deepened until Henry entered his teens. And Mother Milans was sure that her love was the crowning influence in his life.

* * *

Henry's Sunday school training began early. As soon as he was able to toddle, he was enrolled as a charter member in the infant class of the Metropolitan Methodist Church, an institution which later attained national recognition and which then numbered among its members such prominent families as those of Ulysses S. Grant, Schuyler Colfax, Chief Justice Chase and members of President Grant's first cabinet. As Henry grew older he knew and mingled with the children of these and other prominent families of the day. With other mischievous boys he took his turn at pulling General Grant's coat tails, and later in his adolescence fought with older boys over the possession of Grant's cigar butts.

At this Sunday school Henry came under the influence of another remarkable woman in the person of his infant class teacher. Miss Cornelia Purcell was the pattern and paragon of all that a Sunday school teacher should be. She had the genius for winning and holding the interest of her little charges. But she had more; she had the love for them to follow them up even after they had grown out of her class. Once enrolled in her class, one became to Miss Cornelia a life-time member.

When Miss Purcell retired from her church work at the age of seventy-five, it was only because she was too feeble to continue longer. But at her retirement she was able to look back upon sixty years of work with infant classes. During this time she had sent thousands of boys and girls out into the world with the teachings of Jesus indelibly written on their hearts. One of "her boys" is now a prominent patent attorney in New York City, another a missionary in China, a third a prominent preacher in California, still another became a naval officer of high rank.

It seems that Miss Purcell had a particular fondness for Henry Milans. Not until after his conversion, when he told her, did she know that he had become a wanderer, and that her love and the memory of her kisses had followed him with the persistence of angels' feet, helping much to keep awake in his heart the desire to live again a pure and noble life. In the years following his conversion he corresponded regularly with her, and always visited her when he was in Washington. She revelled in these letters and visits and was exceedingly proud of her "great big boy," her two hundred and fifty-pound "infant," as she affectionately referred to him to the last.

* * *

The school days of Henry Milans cannot be chronicled as a period of eager study and perfect devotion to the Goddess of Education. His interest in things pertaining to a curriculum was not even lukewarm. The fact is, Henry was unable to retain much of the mental fare offered him. There was a reason for this; his quick wit and natural brightness so disarmed his teachers that he was kept a grade in advance of where he should have been. As a consequence his brain was usually in a muddle concerning the subject in hand. His precocity became a hindrance.

Spelling was his particular *bête noire*. In this he had two associates in class. They made up what he calls a "trinity of dubs" who in any spelling match of one hundred words could be depended upon to misspell at least ninety. Every match soon developed into a contest between the unholy three to determine who would miss the most.

Becoming disgusted with trying to grasp subjects that were beyond him, Henry usually forsook the complex problems to engage his mind on some mischievous project that was forever keeping him in hot water with the school powers. Books, teachers and classrooms produced in him a weight of *ennui* that could be relieved only by "raising Cain." So his active mind was soon turning out improvements on the patent modes of deviltry then in vogue among mischievous boys. Except for furnishing him with a temporary outlet for a fun-loving nature, school did little for Henry Milans.

* * *

One of the traits which was early noticeable in Henry, and which later was to be regarded as one of his strong characteristics, was his independence. As a boy he considered it belittling to have to ask his parents for spending money. There were ways for boys to earn a little after school hours. Among these was newspaper selling. So at a very tender age he took up the vocation of newsie, partly to earn money and partly because he liked to be out on the streets where the throngs were.

In vending his papers about Washington, Henry met and came to know in that peculiar intimacy which sometimes exists between men and newsboys a number of the great political lights whose names now illumine the history of that day. Among these were James G. Blaine, James A. Garfield, Ben Butler, Charles Sumner, and

Thaddeus Stevens. The last-named—then aged, dignified and testy—he met quite forcibly and unpleasantly one day when, in coming down a steep incline on a sled, on the Senate side of the National Capitol, he dumped that worthy on his noble brow. Picking himself up from the snow, the irascible old senator released some of his choicest maledictions—usually reserved for his political adversaries—at the rapidly disappearing Henry. This story Milans tells even now with a mischievous glint in his eyes.

After having saved a sufficient amount by selling papers on the streets, Henry bought a newspaper route of his own. No merchant prince, directing the affairs of an enterprise that nets him millions, ever got half the thrill from being "in business for himself" that comes to the boy with a newspaper route. To this rule Henry was no exception.

It was through this same newspaper route that he was first brought in contact with his evil influences. His route included a certain segregated section of the city which adjoined the encampment of the forces under General Joseph Hooker. Here he received impressions which were to have a sinister power on his young life.

III

THE FIRST DRINK

TWO great passions, destined in affinity to rule his life, came early to Henry Milans. He found them both in a printing shop . . . type and alcohol.

The love for type first showed itself when he was a newsboy. Old printers, seeing Henry going to the "hell-box" and gathering up cast-off type to take home and set into words, would shake their heads and sigh in that pessimistic gesture that printers use upon seeing a likely-looking youngster showing any proclivity for the trade which they never recommend, but always love. They read in his interest in type the certain destiny of a journeyman.

Now there are men who are born printers. Type, to some, may be dead, cold, uninspiring. To others, however, it is mystery, romance, adventure, life. These others gravitate to type as naturally as the farmer goes to his soil. They thrill to its touch with the same eagerness as that which is felt by the artist when he handles his brushes, the surgeon when he fingers his instruments, the lawyer when he turns over his books. Born to love the smell of printers' ink, born to hear as music the clatter and rumble of presses—these are the geniuses of their craft.

To the roster of such men we append the name of Henry Milans.

From the time his fingers first touched type, he knew his vocation. Printing was his first love, a love to which he was to be wedded for fifty-five years, a love from which he was never able to divorce his interest.

So, as he sold and delivered his papers, he watched for a chance to launch out on the career that was beckoning to his innermost being. His opportunity came, as opportunities do when looked for.

It was during vacation time. Mother Milans had suffered a temporary breakdown and was away for a few weeks to recuperate. Henry heard of an opening for an apprentice in a printing shop. Here was his escape from the boredom of school-room monotony! Here was a chance to enter into the life of that most blessed of men, the printer! He took the job.

* * *

Henry thrilled to his new environment. Although he was at first only a handy boy about the shop, and for months got no wages, he found occasion to feed his appetite for the trade. He would stand by the make-up "stone," watch the type being placed in the forms, and ask questions. In a short time he had become the life of the shop. He enjoyed his work, and he showed it. The printers liked him for the contagion of his bubbling good nature. He could "kid" with them, swap banter for "wise-crack," and enter into their jokes and pranks.

It was these same printers who aroused in him the greatest force of adolescence—hero-worship. They savoured of boldness, masculinity. They impressed him as being men who possessed a sly, juicy knowledge of life that, though frowned upon by the orthodox, was interesting to the extreme.

He listened to their talk of the exhilarating effects of liquor. He watched them as they paused every hour or so to toss down a draught of the whiskey which they so often brought with them to work. He felt an urge to give the elixir a trial. He could see that, in their philosophy, to be able to "carry his liquor" was the badge and bond of the good mechanic.

His curiosity was aroused. And curiosity has been the parent of many a subtle temptation.

* * *

One day the printers invited him to accompany them to lunch. They made their way to a certain notorious saloon. Here they drank with evident enjoyment as they ate their lunch—the boy watching them. They did not offer him any of the liquor, be it said to their credit. But with the diligent attention of a social climber watching her hostess for the correct use of a plurality of forks, he noted their manner at the bar.

A short while later, when business was slack, he slipped out of the shop and ran back to the saloon. A negro was in attendance at the bar. He had seen Henry with the printers. So when the boy, with a nonchalant air, tossed a coin on the counter and called for a glass of whiskey, the negro gave it to him.

In imitation of the men, Henry brought it up to his lips with a sweeping gesture. He hesitated a moment, wondering what would be the effect. Then, impulsively, he tilted the glass. The whiskey fumes almost choked him. The first swallow burned a path of liquid fire to his stomach. But with it came a feeling of experience, sophistication. He was now one of the fellows! And as he walked away from the saloon, he straightened himself in his new sense of manhood.

With the lever of curiosity he had pried open the floodgates which were to admit years of more liquid sorrow, more liquid remorse, more liquid hell than he knew the world possessed. At first he loved whiskey for the swaggering manhood he thought it gave him; later he was to love it simply for itself.

Years afterwards he reeled around to that saloon, located the negro, and soundly cursed him for giving him that first drink.

On another occasion, this after his conversion, he again visited the site. The saloon had been located near the lower end of "Hooker's Division," previously mentioned as the first place of sinister influence met by the young newsie. In its heyday the institution was a combination bar, gambling house and harbor for dissolute women. And Milans, now passing the site after many years, fully expected to see the same sort of business going on at the same old stand. Imagine his surprise at finding a Salvation Army hall now occupying the site on which once stood the habitation of sin's prize triplets. He looked at the attractive Army hall, then looked at himself—two miracles of transformation; the Army had regenerated both the house and its product! Across its front in three-foot letters were the thrilling words, "Jesus is mighty to save." That night Milan's testimony to this power rang out in the same room where he had become a gambler and a drunkard.

But between that saloon and its radical metamorphosis there is a long story to tell. We must get back to it.

* * *

After that first drink other dissipations followed, and in rapid succession. Soon Henry was bold enough to call for his drinks with the crowd. The printers laughed in good-natured surprise. They saw no calamity; he was "developing." They thought it was a credit to the shop for their "kid" to put away the hard liquor like an old-timer. They received him now as a full-fledged member of the Fraternity of Good Fellows—privileged not only to drink with them, but also to companion with them in seeking diversion at cheap theatres. His evenings took on a roseate hue. He began staying out late, pursuing entertainment until far into the night.

At home the heart of Mother Milans was troubled. She began to suspicion that all was not as it should be, and she wondered about those long evenings when he was away from home. She did not know of his dissipations, but she did know that the old companionship between her and her son was gone. No longer did he rush into the house to take her in his arms and draw her to a chair while he talked of his day at the shop. No longer did he discuss with her his plans, his ambitions. He was evasive when she asked him about his evenings. Night after night she would remain up until long past midnight to bid him good-night before going to her room to toss in sleepless anxiety.

Her heart had quailed in fear when she returned from her vacation to find Henry apprenticed to the printing trade. She knew that in this new environment, away from her side, he would meet strong temptations. To her mind all printers were habitual drinkers and all printing shops notorious for the loose conduct of their men.

She had thought of these things then and trembled. Were her fears to be realized? Was her boy—her much loved and carefully guarded one—even now forsaking those teachings and principles she had planted in his childhood's very soul? No, no! It could not be. Her boy could not go bad. God would not allow it! Had she not given him to God as a babe? Certainly God would not let His own be lost!

But Mother Milans was to feel the thrust of the most cruel sword that can pierce the mother-heart. Her anxious uncertainty was to give way to poignant, heart-breaking certainty.

* * *

One night at the theatre, which Henry was attending with some of the men from the shop, drinks were passed freely between acts. And Henry got thoroughly and helplessly drunk. His companions took him home. Carrying him up the steps they propped him against the door, rang the bell and ran off.

Mother was up, awaiting the return of her boy. Perhaps this evening he would be his old self; maybe they would have one of their old, beautiful times together before retiring. Hearing the loud peal of the doorbell, she ran in eager expectation to the door. With a glad little cry, she threw it open. But the cry died in her throat as the idol of her life, helplessly drunk, toppled into her arms. His weight fell heavily against her body, but it was as nothing compared with the force of the blow that struck her soul. Her heart chilled with a horror such as only one thing could bring, the vision of her boy's ruin. In a panic she half carried him to his room, saw him safely to bed, summoned a doctor, and then fell to her knees—seeking the only Rock she knew amidst her crumbling world.

From that time Mother Milans seemed to age perceptibly. Seldom smiling, she became silent, brooding, more prayerful.

Hope she did. Pray she did. But she knew with the bitter knowledge of a broken heart that her boy had got away from her.

IV

DELIRIUM TREMENS AT TWENTY

WHY did Henry Milans fall? To those psychologically inclined, it will be interesting to pause at this point of the story to ask that question. Somewhere, traceable to his innermost character, there must be a reason for this violent precipitation from the heights of a godly home to the depths of depravity.

In tracing causes, we must eliminate "Heredity." Diligent but vain search has been made of the Milans family history for even one case of inebriety, to which the blame might be attached. His was no flare-back from ancestral weaknesses. We have reviewed the characters of the parents sufficiently to show that Henry Milans was born well. His father died without knowing the taste of liquor. His mother was virtue itself.

Henry Ward Beecher once said, wittily but not wisely, that if he could be born right the first time he would be willing to take his chances on the Second Birth. That statement may have given a clever turn to good oratory, but its value ceased with its utterance. Experience has proved that a good birth does not necessarily guarantee a good life. Witness in Henry Milans the boy who was "born right."

In seeking an explanation for his fall, we must also pass up "Lack of Proper Training." As we have seen, the Milans home was a godly home. Mother Milans was a wise, loving mother who appealed always to the best in her children. Henry, as her favourite, was made the special object of her careful Christian training.

Churches and child welfare organizations say, "Give us a child until he is seven years old, and we will so train him that he will not thereafter depart from our teachings." In most cases this assurance is based on tried and proved philosophy. The tree generally inclines as the twig has been bent. But it did not work with Henry Milans.

So it is seen that the stock reasons for waywardness do not fit this particular case. There was something in this precocious child that was mightier than the foundation of safe heredity and stronger than the ties of early and proper training. What was it?

Henry Milans himself tells us that the underlying cause of his downfall was *an irresistible desire—reckless and heedless of consequences—to try out things that were new to him, to taste of the forbidden thing.* It seems that in him was a double portion of the same spirit so evident among ultra-modern youth of today. To thrill and be thrilled! In that he was ahead of his time.

Modern parents who find their boys and girls more afraid of being considered "inhibited" than they are of being thought sinful may see in young Henry Milans a pre-view of their own offspring. The idea of anything saying "no" to this spirited young man served only to spur him on to a more wholesale violation of the "Thou Shalt Nots."

Henry Milans found himself to be the possessor of an overwhelming love for the adventurous, the spectacular, the startling. In the impulse itself there was nothing particularly vicious. Steered in the proper direction this impulse might have led him into channels of great usefulness. He needed not only restraint, but guidance. But at the critical period when guidance was the one thing needful, he had for his intimate companions and heroes only reckless men who cared only for the baser things.

And "Alcohol," says Professor William James, "is the great exciter of the 'yes' function in man." Curiosity and alcohol have united in more than one case to give birth to youth's ruin.

Knowing his mind and environment at this time, any well-grounded psychologist could have predicted accurately his end.

Dr. Frederick Tracy, in his work "The Psychology of Adolescence," sets the critical age of youth as between twelve and sixteen. That is the period of extremes, according to this authority. Says he, "It seems as though (at this time) the adolescent discovers his own powers, both to do good and to do evil. We find here the greatest number of positive eruptions of the inner energies. Among adolescents, in a vast number of cases the first drink was taken in the teens, and the highest number of first intoxications would probably be found to occur about the sixteenth year."

All this coincides perfectly with the experience of Henry Milans.

* * *

In a previous chapter, we have briefly sketched the character of Father Milans. Lest the reader should feel that the lines drawn were too harsh and be led to believe that behind that severe and unbending exterior there beat a heart of the same hard texture, let us picture him again in a revealing moment.

It was late, and all was dark in the house excepting one room in which a lamp shone dimly. In this room sat a mother and a father. One did not have to be told for whom they were waiting. Their boy had not been home for several days. The mother was crying softly.

On the other side of the room the father was trying to appear engrossed in his paper, but its nervous rustling belied the clumsy ruse. Finally he arose, walked over to the mother's chair, awkwardly patted the wet cheeks, stroked the grey and thinning hair. Then he resolutely picked up his hat and left the house.

Hours of searching finally brought him before a certain bar-room door. From inside came noises of carousing, clink of glasses, maudlin song. Then suddenly above these sounds of revelry he heard the voice for which he was listening. Tears of sorrow and shame welled into his eyes and trickled down to the corners of his quivering mouth. His son—there!

Just then the swinging doors opened to permit the exit of a reeling customer. And it happened that the boy within and the man without glimpsed each other at the same time. The boy burst through the doors and stood amazed before the great, dignified figure so incongrously stooped and weeping. Could this be the austere demigod of his childhood? Could it be that this man, his father, loved him enough to shed tears over him?

Henry Milans really saw his father then for the first time. Through his own tears he now stood looking into a well of paternal affection of whose existence he had not dreamed. "Come, Dad," said the boy. And for the first time father and son walked home together—pals. The union of tears had wrought understanding.

But understanding had come late. During many years following this incident Father Milans tried to awaken in his boy an affection that his father-heart now craved. His letters to Henry in New York pleaded for the love that he should have won in childhood. He visited New York often on one pretext and another, but really to see his boy and tell him he loved him. Father Milans died at the age of eighty-eight still reaching out for the heart of his best-loved boy.

* * *

For some time following the revelation of his father's interest in him Henry walked the chalk-line of sobriety. His boyhood had grown old; his manhood was awakening. He glimpsed for a moment the evils of the glass and determined to hold in check his developing appetite for whiskey. But this wave of determination bore him but briefly on its crest, only to deposit him again in the grip of the terrific undertow of the habit he had formed. He now felt the full strength of the fiery devil within him, and knew the frailty of his once-proud boast that he could "take it or leave it alone."

When he was seventeen, he left his home for a time, and took a furnished room downtown. He wanted freedom from those things that stirred his conscience; the sad eyes of Mother Milans seemed to burn holes into his heart.

Away from home, the evil influences were redoubled. Now his time was his own; there was none to whom he must fabricate excuses for late hours and suspicious conduct. He learned to gamble and soon became a well-known figure in all sorts of places where his breezy, affable personality gave him a popular entry. Sporting men, gamblers and worse became his friends.

At the age of eighteen he quit the printing office and went to work on the *Washington Post,* where he became a helper on the compositors' "stones." Here he quickly acquired the art of newspaper make-up, for which he was to evince a particular skill. After spending a year on the *Post,* he went to *The Washington Republic,* then owned by John Brisbane Walker, who later founded *The Cosmopolitan* in New York.

When he was twenty he again changed jobs. This step took him to the Government Printing Office, an unfortunate move. As the job had come to him through personal influence he could do as he liked without fear of being discharged. He would often take his pay, received in a lump sum at the end of each month, get gloriously drunk and stay away for weeks at a time, always sure that his job would be good when he returned. It became a regular thing for him to squander most of his wages in this manner. Naturally, his descent was made with dizzying rapidity.

* * *

Then one day, while on one of these monthly sprees, he was brought home to his mother—beastly drunk and in the grip of his first attack of delirium tremens. To add terror to the sight of his condition, the whiskey had caused a slight throat hemorrhage; his shirt bosom was covered with blood.

What a blow to the already heart-broken Mother Milans—her youngest and best-beloved son a confirmed drunkard, and that before he had reached his majority.

But with tender care and love—always hopeful, always prayerful—she nursed him back to normalcy. During all this, she never upbraided, but only pleaded with him in her quiet way. The weeks that followed saw him make spasmodic resolutions and attempts to do better. But always he backslid from his splendid resolve when faced with temptation or discouragement.

* * *

After a few weeks of earnest effort and depressing failure, Henry became thoroughly disgusted with his inability to live a sober life, and determined to get away from the old influences and go elsewhere to begin anew. He decided on New York City. Every boy in that day (as in this) who felt he had talent or ability in art or commerce—ability that just would not, or could not, come to fruition in his home town—dreamed of the "big city."

When the matter was first broached to Mother Milans, she was startled with fear. What would New York City—big, heartless, wicked—do to her boy? But there was the argument of new associations, and so after a family conference, it was agreed that perhaps the change would be for the best.

Only a mother heart can fully comprehend the pain experienced in that hour of parting between mother and son. In their last moments together, and after they had had a long talk—the first for a long, long while—Mother Milans slipped to her knees, drawing her son down beside her. Gently, and in a voice that somehow would not steady, she raised her trembling petition that God would watch over her beloved. And at that moment Henry Milans was nearer to being a man than he was to be for many a long year to come.

When he arose from his knees, his eyes were blurred with unshed tears. Then, in that hallowed moment of farewell, Mother Milans folded him in her arms, and with great tears coursing down the cheeks in lines his own sin had traced, she spoke to him as to an innocent.

"Go, my boy; go and see what you can make of it. The world will be full of hardships for you. It will be pitiless often. There will be snares. But remember that wherever you are, or whatever you may become, Mother is home here praying that some day God will bring you back to her lap again—a Christian man."

With a faith that still burned, incredibly constant in the face of fear, the mother kissed her son, waved him out of sight, and ran back into the house to choke her sobs in her pillow and baptize her fears with prayer.

V

EARLY NEWSPAPER EXPERIENCE

THE entrée of Henry Milans into New York does not fit well under the heading "How an ambitious young man in search of fame and fortune should arrive in the Big City." Far from it. He arrived thoroughly drunk.

Alcohol had so pickled his sensibilities that his recollections of the trip from Washington are exactly nil, nothing more. Some of the "boys" had heard of his going, had waylaid him on the way to the railroad station, and had given him an impromptu farewell party. If all the toasts to his health and success that were drunk that night had materialized, Milans would have become both robust and rich beyond calculation.

But the liquid good-wishes served only to deliver him to New York City and the gutter at the foot of Cortlandt Street, stupidly drunk. Back in Washington his consciousness had taken the wings of alcohol and flown away, only returning to him in New York when a policeman's nightstick beat a tattoo on his soles. He opened his eyes to unfamiliar impressions. The officer told him where he was, and he got to his feet and directed his steps uptown. Arrived at Park Row, he sat down on a bench and regarded the lofty buildings of Newspaper Row, wondering which one housed the paper on which he hoped to work.

* * *

Park Row, however, was not to know him for yet awhile. His first position in New York was in the book publishing house of J. J. Little, where for a time he assisted in the make-up of the then famous "Chatterbox," and other publications for which this old house was celebrated.

He was not long with Little's, however, before he received a more attractive offer from the mechanical department of the *Westchester Times,* at that time the principal newspaper north of Harlem. The *Times* was the organ and advertising medium for a large section of suburban and farm country, which today comprises the thickly settled Bronx.

Here he worked hard and soon showed such ability that the shop foreman began to leave him in charge while he went off on periodic sprees. In time the owners discovered this and the foreman being discharged, Henry Milans was advanced to fill the vacancy.

Encouraged by his success, and anxious to make it continuous, Milans' resolve concerning liquor now got its second wind. With the exception of an occasional glass, he became for several years a fairly consistent rider of the water wagon. His drinking, when he did drink, was done week-ends and in lower New York City.

Now, as was always the case when he was able to keep sober, his genius, sunned in sobriety, expanded itself. He plunged into his work whole-heartedly, determined to give the best that was in him. He had become an expert printer and his knowledge was highly prized by his new employers.

* * *

But the ambitions of Henry Milans were not to be confined alone to the mechanical department of the business. His primal love for printing had introduced him to what appealed to him as the most romantic and energetic member of the publishing family . . . the newspaper.

Nobody lives so close to the throbbing heart of humanity as does the newspaperman. So it was only natural that one so tremendously human as Milans should see the beckoning finger of the editorial rooms. As he set the words written by others and arranged the news gathered by others, he wondered if he might not be able to go to places, interview persons, see things . . . and write about them. An inborn talent was fighting its way to development.

After working in the shop all day he persuaded the editor to give him reporting assignments at night. As the *Westchester Times* was a weekly, he had plenty of time to prepare his copy. So after covering the assignments he would take his stories home and carefully write them. From the very first, he showed signs of being in possession of that most valuable of the reporter's instincts . . . the "nose for news." This intuitive knowledge of news values, linked with the ability to go out and bring back the story, made of him an ideal "news hound." And he was surprised to find that he not only could discern a story, but could write it acceptably. He had inherited his father's capabilities along this line.

* * *

Now, there are not many thrills in life that can compare with the thrill of appearing in print. There are few persons who do not at some time in life feel the urge for self-expression. Perhaps more prodigies of the pen are made by type than by nature. The cub reporter's story may look like so much drivel to the city editor, but to the reporter himself it is the very soul of literature . . . inspired and immortal. To an editor, flooded with worthless manuscript and beset by unrecognized wizards of words, the world is just one large group of people who may be convinced of any failure, any shortcoming, any inability but one; to wit, that they cannot write.

But while the thrills are occasionally for the mistaken novice, who somehow breaks into print, rewards come only to the few. In the case of Henry Milans, because he was born with a natural aptitude for both printing and journalism, he rapidly advanced in the editorial as well as the mechanical departments of newspaper work.

In time he was given access to the editorial column. Gifted with a keen insight and a well-balanced judgment that divined the significance of events, his editorials were always keen analyses of the day's topics. Advertisers and subscribers began to take notice; sparks were appearing in the editorial column. Further, the paper was being improved in every department. Milans worked incessantly day and night.

* * *

As time went on, and circulation increased, he was given complete charge of the *Times*. Of this he was quick to take advantage. The all-round experience that he gained on this paper was to benefit him widely in his later downtown journalism.

When he came to the *Times,* it was an ungainly sheet, almost a yard long with a page ten columns wide and consisting of four pages—the largest sized sheet in the country. Given a free hand at make-up, he went to work to make the paper attractive typographically. This he did by dressing up the news pages with contrasting "heads," boxes, and pictures, and adroitly arranging the advertisements to give balance and effect.

He found, as did Lord Northcliffe, that it is possible so to construct a page of news that it will "leap to the eye." He practised the art of "display" in such a manner that the *Times* became the leading newspaper of the Bronx and Westchester county. Its influence politically and otherwise was dominant. It had become a power. And so had Milans.

This uptown section of New York City was now growing so fast that something more than a weekly newspaper was needed. Milans saw the opportunity and urged the *Times* owners to enter the daily field before the downtown papers stole it from them. To this they agreed and put him in complete charge of the new enterprise. Under his direction, both the *Advocate* (daily) and *Westchester Times* (weekly) enjoyed a greater prestige than they were ever again to know. Though in size and circulation, the *Advocate* could not compete with the great downtown dailies, in its own field, which covered a vast territory, it was supreme.

* * *

The popularity of the paper soon reflected itself to its controlling genius, and Henry F. Milans came to be recognized as something of a political and social figure in the Bronx.

He was happy. The paper was his life, and as he wrote and directed by day and planned and schemed by night he felt that he had reached his peak of happiness.

But joys, like sorrows, seldom come singly. On the threshold of his happiness was the second great woman of his life, who was to stand in Mother Milans' stead in loyalty and affection.

But that is another chapter.

VI

THE UNUSUAL WOMAN

SHORTLY after beginning work on the *Westchester Times,* Henry Milans began to cast about for a suitable place to live. Among the places recommended to him was a boarding-house presided over by the genial personality of Elizabeth Brown.

Mrs. Brown, be it said, was a woman of twin interests in life. She was first a woman with the deepest sympathy for anyone in trouble and second an ardent espouser of the prohibition cause. For these two things was she famous. In her boarding-house nutrition and prohibition walked hand in hand; her boarders got plenty of both. Those who would partake of the one must graciously put up with the other.

That Henry Milans should, of his own free will and volition, take up residence in so dry an atmosphere as this, may smack somewhat of the incredible. But to Mrs. Brown's he was attracted. Wafted to him on the gentle breeze of his good impulse came the idea that if he wanted to keep away from liquor, here was a good place in which to live.

* * *

Among the other boarders at Mrs. Brown's was a Mrs. Susan Hathaway Simonds, organist for the nearby Congregational Church. She was a nervous, energetic, busy woman who impressed Milans as being satisfied only when on the move. Herself an earnest Christian, she saw no reason why she should not do her best to inveigle her more lax fellow-boarders into church attendance. And it was at the insistent invitation of Mrs. Simonds that Milans finally put in his first appearance at the Congregational Church.

A new minister had just come to the church, a strong, virile type of ecclesiastic by the name of John P. Coyle. Milans was captivated by his vigorous personality as a man is always attracted to a "man's man," and from his first visit he became a fairly regular attendant at church. He liked it. Love of worship had been born in him.

Adjoining Mrs. Brown's "hotel" was a room that at one time had been the fashionable barroom of the village of Morrisania. This apostle of prohibition conceived the idea of transforming the place into a Gospel Temperance Hall, where meetings were held several nights in the week and twice on Sunday. Several of the very earnest leaders in this movement were men converted from lives of sin and drunkenness. Mrs. Simonds, as the organist, led the music.

After a great deal of persuasion Mrs. Brown induced Milans to attend the temperance meetings, and in this way he became acquainted with some splendid people who were earnestly working for the salvation of men's souls.

They knew that Milans was a drinker and pleaded with him to give it up entirely. One Sunday afternoon he walked forward and signed the pledge to abstain from all drink.

Curiously enough, in the light of future events, it was Mrs. Simonds who ran after him as he walked away from the platform and in a very sincere way wished him success in the step he had taken.

* * *

Now, if Milans was anything at all, he was an enthusiast. It is characteristic of the man that if he worked, he worked with all his might. If he drank, he drank deeply and long. And when he attended church, he went in to get the most out of it.

So we are not surprised to find him one Sunday morning occupying a front pew, with Mrs. Simonds just in front of him at the organ. A hymn is announced, and he enters heartily into the congregational singing. Mrs. Simonds, who was in charge of the night choir, hears him and after the service is concluded she turns upon him and unlooses a lecture that is as vigorous as it is direct.

"You should be ashamed of yourself, Mr. Milans, sitting in the congregation with that voice! If you don't join my choir, I shall appeal to Mr. Coyle. It's just awful when we are in such need of voices—and you sitting down here."

And she didn't stop talking until he had promised to be at the next rehearsal. She finally persuaded him to take a place in the choir which she had patiently drilled and built up to a large and well-trained unit. He felt sure that he had a bass voice. She declared it to be an excellent tenor. Needless to say, he sang tenor in the choir. And through her training he became the tenor soloist, and later was assigned to sing as one of the quartette.

This period, in length about two years, was one of the best of his life before his conversion. During this time the young editor's popularity in the social and church life of the community kept step with his striding success on the *Times*. He was surrounded by people in whose regard he stood high. He enjoyed the atmosphere of camaraderie in which he found himself. There was something so fine, so clean, so wholesome about mingling with them.

Under these influences Milans kept sober for a long time. He realized that his welcome among this class was dependent upon his keeping the pledge he had made at the Gospel Temperance Meeting.

To one who knew Henry Milans and his appetite for whiskey, and who stood watching on the sidelines at this time, his abstinence would have appeared unbelievable. But to such an onlooker the climactic surprise would have come upon seeing him walk voluntarily into those temperance meetings and take deep interest in what was said and done. But he continued his attendance.

Of course, we can almost hear the gossips whisper that the presence of Mrs. Simonds, the organist, may partly account for Milan's interest. And gossips are not always wrong.

* * *

Milans was indeed getting on.

During one of their talks together Mrs. Simonds mentioned that she would soon have to seek employment, other than that afforded by her music. Milans, knowing something of her circumstances as well as her ability and large acquaintance, offered to engage her on the *Times*, if she thought she could break into the work.

She delightedly accepted, and soon proved to be a valued addition to the paper. She knew the people of that section well, and spent her time reporting, soliciting subscriptions, and collections. She proved to be a fluent writer, having that vivacious touch to her writings that makes feature stories and reports of society events easy to read. She worked hard at this work and soon developed an attractive style.

Her work now being what it was quite naturally meant that the young editor and his star lady reporter were thrown together a great deal. Of course, at first he had to instruct her in her duties. Then it was only proper that he should help her with the preparation of a particularly good story. And who, professing to be a gentleman, could think of allowing a lady to go home after dark unescorted? And, further, what fast-growing business does not now and then require some attention after office hours, say, for instance, a dinner engagement at which affairs may be talked over; or a long walk in the evening? Indeed, legion is the number of important things that an eligible young man in control of a flourishing newspaper can find it imperative to discuss with an attractive assistant.

Milans, without pausing to ask himself why, was conscious that work on the *Times* was becoming more and more attractive these days.

Then one day in the editorial office, he turned to his assistant and said, jokingly: "But if I have to loan you money, keep you in a job and be forever helping you with your work, as well as feeding you innumerable dinners, I may as well marry you and make a steady job of it."

"That's a very good idea," she replied, laughing. "I'll consider your proposal."

Not long after this the *Westchester Times* ran an announcement of the engagement of its editor and his chief assistant.

* * *

Then came the preparing of the nest. Together they had picked out a pretty cottage on Washington Avenue. It was not very big—just room enough for two persons very much in love with each other. Henry shared in the choosing of the house, but there his function ceased. Susan took over the entire responsibility of seeing that the nest was properly feathered. She forbade him even to go near it until she gave the word.

She would snatch every available minute between her duties to hurry off to the little cottage to add a touch here, a touch there. Seeing her come into the office with a mysterious smile on her face and a more mysterious package in her arms, he would know that the little home was about to receive another adornment. And he would smile back and wisely ask no questions.

Finally came the day when his masculine eyes might view her handiwork of love. With the ecstasy of a small girl about to spring a great surprise, she led him to the new home. The shades had been carefully pulled down, and before entering she placed her hands over his eyes, leading him inside. Then, making him promise not to open his eyes until told, she ran to raise the shades.

"You may look now," she said shyly, slipping an arm about his waist. When his eyes opened, they looked upon a perfect little bower, attractively furnished, tastefully decorated—a nest such as brides and grooms have dreamed of since time immemorial.

The next day, standing together in the parlour of the little home, they were married by the Congregational preacher.

* * *

The years immediately following were years of supreme happiness for them both. Her trust in him was absolute and implicit; no doubts disturbed the serenity of her affection. She was proud of his increasing success, applauding his work and stimulating the best in him.

As for him, he was happier than he thought it possible for man to be. He now kept entirely away from drink. The influence of church life, of her music, of herself, kept thoughts of evil indulgences out of his mind. He had no desire but to hasten after working hours to the little home where awaited him the inspiration and happiness of her.

She it is to whom Henry Milans refers as "the Unusual Woman." In the months and years that lay ahead—thirty-seven of them—she was to prove her right to that designation.

VII

DARKENING CLOUDS

WHILE, however, within their bark of bliss all was well for a season, circumstances were soon to cast a cloud over the happiness of Milans and his wife—circumstances that presaged a storm of severest intensity, a tidal wave of billowing tragedy.

The *Daily Advocate* and the *Westchester Times,* under the direction of Henry Milans, had been highly successful for some years. And doubtless the papers would not only have maintained, but steadily increased their hold on the Bronx had not outside capital come in.

But outside capital brought new stockholders. And stockholders, especially new ones with political ambitions, sometimes feel inspired to meddle with their investment. Not content to sit back and wait for the certain dividends, these stockholders allowed their idle hands and political affiliations to interfere with the management of the paper. This not only handicapped the pursuit of the tried and proved policies, but in time bred constant friction with the management. Milans saw the end of such tampering tactics and immediately began to seek another connection.

To find an editorial berth was not difficult for one who had made such a reputation for himself as had Milans. For some time the eyes of William Cauldwell, contemporary with Dana, Greeley and Bennett, had been on the *Advocate* and Milans because of his very intimate knowledge of affairs in the upper sections of the city, a territory that was as yet virgin to the big papers of Park Row.

So when news of his departure from the *Times* had become known, he promptly received an offer to manage the Harlem branch of the *Daily Mercury,* which later became the *Morning Telegraph.*

This offer gave him the chance for which he had long been waiting, a break into the downtown newspapers. He accepted it. His duty was to furnish daily copy—both news and ads—for two pages of the *Mercury,* and his territory covered everything in the city north of 79th Street to the city line at Yonkers. To assist him, he was given a large staff of trained reporters.

For a time he made the most of the opportunity, to the satisfaction of the men downtown and to the happiness of the one who had enshrined him in her heart. At his office Henry Milans was weaving for himself a strong pattern of success, and at home the Unusual Woman was dreaming happy dreams.

* * *

Then came the cloud of circumstances hinted at in the opening paragraph of this chapter. Milans found that his new work required that he should be away from home more than previously. He often was out from the early afternoon of one day until the early morning of the next. Following close on the scent of "big stories," he was frequently in the presence of drinking, gambling and crime, which meant that he was again brought into close contact with the same kind of society that had induced his first downfall.

This reversion to his old type of environment wrought his second undoing.

At first he began to tipple mildly with beer. This did not have much effect upon him, as his stomach had years before become accustomed to the more boisterous onslaughts of straight whiskey. But from beer to whiskey is not a long jump. Liquor of all kinds was to be had. Nights were cold. Bracers were often needed. A capable news-hound must be a good sport. Getting the news was often dependent upon the reporter's willingness to be sociable. Besides, what was the harm? Who would be the wiser for his occasional glass?

And the preying wolves of appetite, long kept at bay by the bonfires of ambition and love, came closer . . . closer.

* * *

Then one day Milans did not come home. Nor did he come the next, or the next. Anxious inquiries at the office revealed nothing. No one had any idea of his whereabouts. Another day passed, and another. Cold terror clutched at the heart of the Unusual Woman. No suspicion of his real condition entered her mind. She could only picture him as having fallen prey to some horrible accident. Visions delivered him up to her broken, mangled, bleeding.

After a week he came—not with the assistance of hospital attendants, but upheld by his own newspaper men; not accompanied with the aural dignity of the wounded, but exuding the stench of liquor; not commanding the sympathy of the accident victim, but arousing the loathing of the decent.

Drunk!

When first she saw these men bearing the stupefied body of her husband, the Unusual Woman recoiled as though struck. Then, in a daze, she led them to the bedroom, where they left him. And when they were gone, she sat for a long while, the back of her hand pressed hard against her mouth, her eyes staring without seeing, with the tearless look of one who has been stricken too deeply for tears.

She had married a drunkard! Slowly the realization dawned. She shut her eyes as though to shut out the truth. But it would not be hidden. She somehow knew that this was just the introduction to her misery. She somehow sensed that there had just been sounded in her ears the opening note of a doleful dirge played to her departed happiness.

But she loved him! That fact sang out louder than his disgrace, louder than the crash of her dreams. She loved him! . . . womanhood's sole excuse for constancy in the face of suffering and maltreatment and infidelity. She loved him! From such unreasoning defiance does Logic turn impatiently away with a shrug of the shoulders. But the closer we get to it the closer we are to divinity.

So with that inward strength of womanhood which causes men to wonder and shake their heads, she steeled herself for whatever the future held for her.

* * *

One cannot but be impressed with the striking similarity of the two great women of Milans' life. In their capacity for affection, in the tragedy of their awakening, in their ability to suffer, the strength of their hope, Mother Milans and the Unusual Woman were seemingly cut from the same pattern. A kindly Providence saw to it that he was never entirely away from the influence of a good woman.

One bright Sunday afternoon she asked him to sit beside her on the sofa in the little library. He had just recovered from the effects of a spree. Placing a hand on his shaking one, she looked for a long moment into his eyes. Then she spoke, very calmly—

"Henry, you are not the kind of man I supposed I was giving my heart to at the altar. Had I known that you were what you are, I should not have married you. But I love you, Henry. And I have determined to hold on and help until that time when God in His goodness gives back to me the man I thought I had married."

Valiantly and patiently she did hold on. Her story, that of the drunkard's wife, is an epic of bravery.

Although he promised her and promised himself repeatedly that every drink should be the last, his resolutions virtually died—at birth. His appetite for liquor, now thoroughly exerting itself, would not be denied. And when under the spell of this appetite, he was ready to adopt any subterfuge, however offensive, or to renounce any principle, however precious, to satisfy the craving. His appetite was once more gaining the mastery, returning at will to conquer him and leave him miserable in the realization of his weakness.

* * *

But the Unusual Woman held on and helped. She earned money in the churches with her music. She became a reporter and worked with him, writing many of the stories he gathered but which he was too drunk to write. When he was in danger of losing his job because of his derelictions, she would go to the office and explain how sick he was. And the editor, though knowing well the true nature of that "sickness," would forget it—for her sake. She braced herself against the tide of his appetite and strove to be the anchor which should keep him off the rocks.

She knew how he loved the organ. Back in their honeymoon days he had given her one for the nest. Many happy evenings they had spent together, she playing while he sang. Or if he was tired, she would play softly and soothingly, bathing his shredded nerves and weary mind in the refreshing mellowness of music.

But now she dedicated the organ to a new ministry. When, watching at the window, she would see him coming home under the influence of whiskey, she would run to the instrument, so that when he entered the door he would find himself in an atmosphere pervaded by the rich tones he so dearly loved. Then she would play him off to sleep. And when he awakened, with a headache and a grouch as left-overs from his spree, she would play him into good humour again.

* * *

Few women are so gifted in the handling of a recreant husband. There are scolds, whose biting sarcasm and scathing censoriousness wither all desire to do better. The Unusual Woman was not of this cloth. Perhaps, some might say, had Milans had a wife of this kind, his prodigalities would have been far less frequent. Not so. Let us remember that one of the strongest influences in the working of his ultimate regeneration was the memory of the Unusual Woman. A lesser woman could never have inspired Milans to hope.

Says he, "I never, in the thirty-seven years of our life together, heard her utter a cross word. Though she never scolded, *her kindness was an awful lash!*" He loved her intensely. More, he worshipped her. And because of this he many times cursed himself and his inability to live worthily of her.

* * *

One of the hardest of her sacrifices came when Mrs. Milans realized that she must sell her home. The little nest was more than a house, it was her heart . . . done in wood, and plaster, and ivy and flowers. It was the dwelling-place of her love, her tenderest memories. But it had to go. And when she turned the key in the door for the last time, she bravely choked back the sobs by assuring herself that to be nearer *him* and his work was worth the sacrifice involved. As she made her way to the one small and barely furnished room that was to take the place of her nest, she held up her head, telling herself that she must be strong because he was weak.

And so she waded through the wreckage of her broken dreams with a trembling trust that somehow, sometime, somewhere God would right things and give back to her the man of her heart.

VIII

ATTAINING THE HEIGHTS

IT is a measure of his marvellous mental vitality that Henry F. Milans was able to achieve success in the face of being so alcohol-handicapped. On the same road, by the wayside of which thousands have fallen never to rise again, his talent led him steadily up in his profession.

But let it not be thought that Milans attained the heights by talent alone. Talent, unaided by exacting toil, does not carry one far. It was only by hard work, self-education, and a constant battle with his appetite that he was able to turn his mental gifts to advantage. By these virtues was he able to stave off the calamity that would have come much earlier to other men not so well-equipped.

Neither would we, by many references to his failures to abstain, leave the impression that his life at this stage was one constant debauch. There were long periods when he was able to keep entirely away from liquor. And there were other periods when he drank only temperately. During these times the work that he produced reflected ability that was quickly recognized, and resulted in his being accordingly advanced.

The surprising thing is not that success came to Milans easily, but that it came at all.

Further, it should be borne in mind that though the Unusual Woman was the inspiration that caused him to *want* to fight the demon within, the actual warfare had to be carried on by himself alone. That he did make that fight, a grim one and an hourly one, is attested by his success.

The downtown editors of the *Daily Mercury* had watched with interest the work of their Harlem representative; and they agreed among themselves that he was a man who should be brought to Park Row. Hence his transfer to the paper's downtown office as telegraph editor.

* * *

Park Row at last! He had gained a foothold that had placed him in a position to mount.

And mount he did. His progress was rapid. The varied groundwork of experience that he had gained in his previous capacities now stood him in good stead. He was soon made night editor and had supervision over the pressroom. He was responsible for catching all mail and newspaper trains. It was here that his expert mechanical knowledge stood him in good stead. With a working schedule that could not vary by more than eight minutes, obstinate printers have frazzled the nerves of many a night editor.

Few persons have any idea of the perils of the midnight press. They do not realize that the items in their morning paper—well-assorted, well displayed and in order for their breakfast-time reading—were in a state of wildest confusion just a few hours earlier. Presiding over things, bringing order out of chaos, is the night editor or managing editor.

A "big story" breaks. Immediately the office leaps to life. The presiding majordomo, glancing at the first lines coming off the wire, grasps the size of the story and in the next five minutes is getting men out on it, having heads written, telephones going after more information, phoning instructions to the press-room, ordering the art department to get out photos and make layouts—in short, standing in about ten minutes the whole place on its toes, and manufacturing a better story than the fellow "next door."

Under such conditions, almost anything can happen. And though he is not always known to the "outside," it takes a true genius to bring breakfast-time order out of midnight chaos.

But Milans was a printer who had mastered every angle of the trade, and his men, knowing this, worked with him without question or friction.

* * *

On Park Row Milans found not only success on his paper, but popularity among the newspaper coterie of that day. In the newsrooms of its great dailies were the brainiest men of an industry that survives on talent. His associates were numbered among the brightest newspaper makers of the nation.

Unfortunately for Milans, however, this congeniality was closely related to conviviality. It was the common practice of many of the editorial workers to congregate, before and after work, in nearby saloons for drinks and to swap stories of the night's work.

Drinking whiskey was not frowned upon in those days unless the drinker allowed it to incapacitate him. If one felt so inclined, while at work, he could call a copy boy, give him an order, and a drink would be served him at his desk from the restaurant in the building. But woe to him if he allowed the habit to interfere with his work or to cloud his judgment of news values! The men who held their jobs were the men who knew how to drink . . . and stop.

Milans, whipped on by his ambition, carefully cultivated this art of self-control. He did not quit drinking; as a matter of fact, he now drank often, with pleasure and at intervals more or less regular. But he had learned to drink with judgment. He knew his "saturation point" and usually managed to stop just short of it.

* * *

Came the great day of his triumph.

He was called, without previous notice, into the owner's office. There he was told that his work as night editor had met with the approval of those who had been watching him. It had been noted, that he was not only capable as a discerner of news and skilled at make-up, but that he possessed the rare ability to handle men. They had seen that he inspired those under him, not only with a respect for his knowledge of the game, but toward a personal liking for him as a man, and this fact made the printers and newsgatherers obviously anxious to please him.

Milans listened, wondering what was coming. He was not long left in suspense.

"And in addition to those qualities that I have named," continued the owner, "we have observed that you are diligent and hard-working. Such things do not go unrewarded on this paper." He paused a moment. Then . . .

"So we have decided to elevate you to the managing editorship of the *American!*"

When Milans left the owner's office he walked as on air. One of the first to hear the great news was the Unusual Woman. She wept for sheer joy at his success. His work had always been her pride. And now that he had reached the top, she fairly bubbled with happiness.

"I just knew you'd do it!" she cried.

In her little Harlem flat that night there was a celebration for two. In a sense it was a farewell party, too, for shortly afterwards they moved to the Cosmopolitan Hotel, close by Park Row, where she might be near him and he near his work. She hoped, in reality, to break him away from the convivial parties of the early morning.

* * *

In the high noon of his success, he enjoyed no little political power. But he never misused it. On the contrary, he used the power that his position brought him for the accomplishing of many acts of mercy. He was forever assisting some one in distress and need. The development of his head had in no way affected the size of his heart. A greater love for humanity, a deeper understanding of its ambitions, hopes, heartaches and struggles grew with his increasing experience and power.

Because he was so human he liked the close association with humanity which newspaper work gave him. News was to him what elements and atoms are to the chemist. The throbbing newsroom was his laboratory. He came to love news, not so much for news itself, as for what it taught him of human nature. He always enjoyed living right up next to the great heart of life. He never became the soured cynic so often the product of the newspaper profession. Out of the floating panorama of daily happenings he built for himself a philosophy of life—tolerant, understanding, sympathetic.

* * *

His position not only brought him a measure of power, but also an enviable reputation on Park Row among his associates. That he did not become a great public personality was because no managing editor of a metropolitan paper then had any great deal of direct contact with the civic life. Such a man was essentially a "man behind the scenes," and was virtually unknown except to his associates.

Public acclaim is usually for one outstanding personality on each paper, generally the owner. Greeley, Dana, the Bennetts, the Pulitzers, Hearst, Ochs . . . these are the names that are internationally known. *Behind* them, loyally supporting their policies, skilfully directing their machines, and daily contributing to their success, were the managing editors. Publicists for everybody but themselves, unknown except to the newspaper fraternity, they wield an influence none the less powerful for its silence.

Having now arrived at the peak toward which he had long been directing his ambition, Milans felt a pardonable pride in his achievement. He loved his profession as he loved his life. He knew his job from the skylights of the engraving room to the cellar in which the huge Goss presses rumbled unceasingly.

From "devil" in a small printing shop to managing editor of a great New York daily newspaper is no short distance. But Milans had made it.

He had mastered his profession!

But he had failed to master himself. And therein lay his greatest failure . . . the certain prophecy of his ultimate undoing.

IX

FIRED!

MILANS' success as managing editor attained the age of two years. For that length of time was he able to wage a fairly successful fight with the Demon. This does not mean that victory was constant. At best it only alternated with defeat. The battle between his will and his appetite was a draw—equal victories, and equal defeats.

For two years, however, he managed *The New York Daily Mercury* in a way that brought it both increased profit and influence.

But now the men in the editorial rooms of the *Daily Mercury* were beginning to look askance at their chief. It was plain that the boss was losing his grip. There were times when he would come to the office in a condition that the most liberal-minded could hardly describe as sober. Then there were other days when he would not come in at all.

When things are loose at the top, it is too much to expect a newspaper to run "jamb-up" for long. It was soon obvious that the managing editor was losing his hold, not only on himself, but on his staff as well. The morale of the office was rapidly falling apart like a castle of sand beset by a rising tide. Things were slipping.

In a business that operates at such high tension as that of a newspaper, any slackness soon becomes evident in a hundred ways. So it was not strange that even so casual a visitor to the offices as the owner should become cognizant of the derelictions of his managing editor.

* * *

One day Milans was surprised to see the owner, who had returned hurriedly from Europe, ushered into his office without notice. Although Milans had received this august personage on any number of previous occasions, without experiencing any qualms, for this visit he felt nervous, apprehensive even.

The owner came directly to the point. He had been advised of certain things. Affairs were not running as they should. The paper was losing prestige, the staff were unsettled, enemies were being made of those who had been potential friends. He rehearsed a long list of complaints.

With bowed head, Milans listened. When the owner had concluded his tirade, leaving the air with the feel of a question mark in it, Milans raised his head and stumblingly tried to explain that any noticeable slump in business was due to a perversity of circumstances. A month or so, he said, would bring a return to normal conditions.

His employer glanced shrewdly at the puffed eyelids and reddened face, not failing to take into account the hands which could not be still. Then, waving aside Milans' weak attempts at explanation, he pointed to a half-empty whiskey glass on the desk.

"It strikes me there's been too much booze connected with this paper, Milans. Too much booze and too little attention to business."

Milans flushed, but offered no reply.

"Now see here. Two years ago I selected you from a large number of likely-looking men. I thought I saw in you a man worthy of advancement. And for those two years I felt that I was right. I wonder now if I have mistaken my man?"

He leaned forward, and tapped the desk sharply with the tips of his fingers.

"I'm putting it up to you, Milans. I want to retain you. I know you can be valuable to me if you will. But, understand me, things must be different from now on. This newspaper must regain its lost prestige and circulation. And you're the man I'm holding responsible!"

With that, he left the office.

* * *

For long after his employer's departure Milans sat at his desk, head in hands, staring at his desk blotter. At first he saw nothing. Then, as he gazed abstractedly, some ink stains on the blotter began to take shape. They looked like bottles, whiskey bottles—dark as his habit, black as his dejection.

Whiskey bottles—mocking his failure, deriding his weakness—stainers of his life, blotting his future. But he would banish them . . . and he reached out his hand to turn the blotter over. But there they were still! The ink had soaked through; it was the same on both sides.

And as he looked, he saw the force of his habit . . . it had seeped through his will, through his good intentions, through his mother's prayers, through his wife's hopes.

"Too much booze," the owner had said.

And it had soaked him through and through—body, mind, spirit. Saturated!

He was aroused from his miserable reflections by the knock and entrance of an office boy, who dropped a paper on his desk. It was fresh off the press, crisp, and smelly with the inky odour that was sweeter to his nostrils than perfume.

He held the paper before him. *His* paper, his handiwork, his very soul! Here was power, here was leadership, here was success. His paper, his life! He would *not* let it go. He would *not* abandon his genius to the spoiling effects of whiskey. He would pull himself up.

But when he arose, paper still in hand, the type and heads and pictures on the front page seemed to congeal, and clot, and shape themselves into a black mass, blotting out the skilful make-up, besmirching his handiwork. And their shape was that of a whiskey bottle!

Angrily he threw the paper into the waste basket and strode out.

* * *

When he arrived home that night, the heart of the Unusual Woman almost stopped when she kissed him. For the first time in a long, long while there was no smell of whiskey on his breath. She read in his eyes and manner a new determination to overcome his appetite. And, without asking questions, she redoubled her efforts to help him win his fight.

For two weeks no man ever fought a tougher, more sincere, more unequal battle. The first skirmishes were comparatively easy. But after a few days it seemed as though all the devils in hell had been turned loose to torment him into subjection. Over and over again, like a child memorizing a text, he repeated: "I must quit. I *must* not give in!"

He knew from experience the folly of trying to taper off. He must *quit at once* and altogether if he would quit at all. But, even as he determined to do so, vagrant doubts as to his ability invaded his resolve.

* * *

The next few days that passed saw him doggedly resisting the burning craving within. Mustering every power of his will he refused drinks offered him, and fled like one demented from the sight of inviting drinking-places. Resolve and desire wrestled for the possession of his will. At times he would feel confident, as though he had triumphed. Then would follow, like the descent of darkness, periods in which his body was racked with appetite, his soul submerged in melancholy. He got little sympathy from his friends; they jeered at his "reform."

Finally, when it seemed impossible for him to resist longer and still live, he gave in.

Of course, he assured himself, this was not surrender . . . it was merely an armistice. One drink, only one, but he *must* have that. He stepped into a bar. Greedily his parched throat drained the glass. The whiskey raced in his blood and sang merrily in his ears. His mind cleared. His nerves steadied. Melancholy dropped from him like a cloak.

Forgetting for the moment his purpose to take only one glass, he drank again and again. Came confidence. Came a sense of restored manhood. Came ideas for his work.

Then suddenly remembering his resolve, he made a feeble effort to shake off the desire to quaff more deeply. But the glass ascended again and again, continuing its round-trip excursion from the bar to his lips until he swayed, he talked thickly, he reeled. Then he toppled over, dead drunk.

* * *

Three days passed before Milans was able again to navigate the course that led to his office. He genuinely regretted his misstep. But while recovering from this last spree he had roughly taken himself in hand, preached to himself sermons that for vituperation and remonstrance would have done justice to any evangelist of the sawdust variety. And now he felt that his soul had been purged, even as with hyssop. Henceforth he would be able to profit by his misstep and more strongly resist temptations.

As he entered Park Row he anticipated the delight of again being back at his desk.

He walked through the outer offices of the *Mercury,* greeting the employees with unusual affability. But why did they regard him so curiously? Had he not been away on "vacations" before, and for longer? He wondered what made them drop their eyes when he looked at them.

He was soon to find out.

He turned into his own private office. And there sat the owner, cane between knees. Milans made an effort at a cordial and respectful greeting. The owner coldly stood up.

"Milans," he said slowly, his eyes piercing the other's face, "I've been waiting to notify you personally that your services are no longer required on this paper."

Milans gaped, opened his mouth as if to speak, but his employer's gesture cut across any intended utterance.

"I'm sorry to take this action, but you have compelled it. Evidently you did not care to take my advice regarding your personal conduct. So for the good of the paper I am forced to dispense with your services."

Milans sank into his chair. When he found his voice it was to protest. But the owner waved his protests aside. Milans pleaded, wept like a child, fairly grovelled before his employer, begging him not to destroy at a stroke all he had slaved to attain. But the owner was obdurate. He left the office with final instructions to arrange affairs for the immediate incoming of the new managing editor.

Fired!

Milans put his hand across his eyes, his elbow resting on what had been his desk. And when he opened them, his eyes settled on the ink-stained blotter. There were the bottles again! And he thought they smirked derisively at him.

X

BLACKLISTED!

IN portraying Henry Milans at this stage of life, we shall be aided by the creation of a simile.

Picture an airplane in the heat of battle. Leaving the landing-field in a graceful take-off it rises with steady swiftness . . . a thing born for the altitude. It banks gracefully against the air forces that would hinder its progress upward; it dashes in and out of treacherous air pockets, unharmed because it is stronger than they. Attaining the heights it sails through the air with the speed and majesty and grace of a conqueror.

But wait! Down below, far below, this thing of the heights is sighted by anti-aircraft guns. Shells, some of them capable of setting fire to whatever they touch, hiss and burst about the airplane—Things of Earth challenging the right of the Thing of the Air to rise; calling it back—cruelly, certainly—to earthly places. Suddenly a shell finds its mark in the gasoline tank. There is a burst of flame. The plane shudders a moment as though conscious of being stricken, shoots upward as though trying to disregard its wound, then, with a helpless lunge, it makes for the ground.

But it does not drop with the directness of an arrow. Like the wounded thing it is, it seems to be trying to regain its power to soar by a series of loops upward that follow the hopeless lunges that are bringing it closer to earth. Watching these short recoveries, one's heart is encouraged to believe that perhaps it may yet overcome its fall. But in spite of its efforts to save itself, the control is gone, and now it has taken its last loop upward and is heading for the ground, trailing clouds of smoke and flame behind. With a sickening crash, the battle is over. The Things of Earth have conquered the Thing of the Air.

That is a fair picture of Henry Milans.

That he had the inborn capability necessary to attain the altitudes is attested by his rapid success. That he had not the power to avoid a mighty fall is seen in the years immediately following his discharge from the managing editorship of the New York *Daily Mercury*. Whiskey had finally stricken him. Down and down he fell, his descent broken by occasional and partial recoveries of sobriety, only to shoot finally down like a meteor for swiftness, trailing his clouds of genius in the wake of his descent.

* * *

Immediately following his curt dismissal from the *Daily Mercury,* Milans set out to inform Park Row that he was now willing to consider offers of any important post on any important paper. To his great surprise, however, Park Row did not capitulate to this opportunity of a life-time. The street's face bore a "Sorry, but I don't believe I know you" expression.

At first he was unable to understand this cold attitude. Then gradually the fact dawned on him that he was blacklisted. Word of his fall had preceded him to the offices of the mentors of Park Row, and knowing of this, they were unwilling to trust him with any position. It was not that he had sinned against any moral code. He had merely indulged an appetite which rendered him unable to produce. And when a man gets to the place where he cannot turn out the work required of him, the fast-moving newspaper game must cast him aside.

Failing by frantic effort to gain an entrance to a newspaper position he became a free lance, a space writer, one of those picturesque figures of journalism who contribute their crumbs of news and feature stories for whatever they can get per column. The Unusual Woman helped him in this. She bolstered up his enthusiasm and even wrote much of the material he gathered. His fall from the *Daily Mercury* had been a great strain upon her faith in him. She realized more than he did how difficult it would be to stage a come-back. She knew how quickly his every new resolution wobbled toward disintegration. But in spite of her failing faith she endeavoured to cheer him to make the fight. And for a while necessity, combined with her efforts, enabled him to keep sober to a degree.

* * *

Many months passed before Milans was able to obtain a position. But finally George W. Turner, who made such an amazing success of the *New York World* and the *New York Recorder,* offered him some emergency work on the latter paper. Somewhat later he succeeded to the night city editorship, and later the night editorship, of the *Recorder.* This, by virtue of a desperate effort to be temperate, he held for about two years.

When the *Recorder* was sold out he obtained a job as copy reader on the *New York Tribune's* night city desk and later became that paper's suburban editor.

His ability to secure a berth on the *Tribune* as one of its editors is no mean testimony to his determination to come back. The *Tribune* was then the standard for precise work, the "high-brow" of Gotham newspaperdom. It had commanded attention under the great Horace Greeley, and now under the editorship of Whitelaw Reid, formerly Greeley's managing editor and one of the most distinguished journalists of any day, it had risen to metropolitan leadership.

He greatly enjoyed his work on the *Tribune.* He felt that he had regained his foothold on the ladder from whose topmost rung he had tumbled. By being careful with his drinking, he advanced steadily and was soon again recognized on Park Row.

* * *

He had just about accomplished the almost impossible task of "coming-back" when he met with a further misadventure.

Out of what he chose to regard as his forgotten past there came a woman to prefer a false charge against him. During the days when Milans was in his position of power as the managing editor of the *Daily Mercury,* among other acts of kindness, he had once gone into court to help clear this woman of a charge of which he believed her to be innocent. He had gone from the court-room thinking the incident closed. But not she. She promptly fell in love with him. And when he repulsed her advances, the fury of the scorned woman, of which we are assured that hell hath no counterpart, manifested itself. She determined to wreck him. So, one night, at the busiest hour in the *Tribune* office, she appeared on the scene and, before all the office force, dramatically brought a blackmailing accusation against Milans. Many of the men in the editorial rooms laughed heartily at his discomfiture. But Milans could see no humour in the situation. The charge, while untrue, was humiliating to one in his position on so sedate a journal as the *Tribune.* And when the managing editor, with no intention of letting him go, remonstrated with him, Milans, subjected to a fit of discouragement, resigned his position. He felt that even when he would do good evil persisted in coming out of it.

Thus, in a seizure of despondency, he gave up in a moment what had promised to carry him forward again to success.

From the *Tribune,* Milans went to Hearst's *Evening Journal,* then edited by Arthur Brisbane. But again his appetite mastered him, and one day he went to his superior and told him that he was going to disappear and not show up again until he had mastered his craving for whiskey.

Milans dropped out of sight for three years.

* * *

When at length he did return, it was to leave Park Row for his old stamping-ground in the Bronx. His old employer, the original owner of the *Westchester Times,* had started another paper. Choosing a man who had been a reporter during the time when Milans was there, he commissioned him to find Milans at any cost. After no little search, the reporter accomplished his mission and delivered his man to the owner, who immediately put Milans in charge of his new project.

Again the airplane looped skyward. For several months Milans did well, kept away from evil influences, and was fairly faithful to the temperance cause. He and the Unusual Woman settled in Tremont, where they were happy for a time. But we are forced to repeat the same monotonous refrain—he soon took to drink again.

He had reached the place where every circumstance, good and bad, led to the same terminus—whiskey. When his responsibilities weighed upon him, he endeavoured to make them more bearable by drink. And when he was happy, he would go to whiskey to celebrate. Liquor became the panacea for all his woes, as well as the toast for all his joys.

The result was the same, in a short while he was more often drunk than sober.

* * *

One night, after having indulged well past the line that marks excess, he was seized with an attack of delirium tremens. The hour was late, but he ran from his home to where his employer lived, shouting under the windows that demons were after him. The whole neighbourhood aroused to hear from his lips the thrilling story of how four Catholic priests had been murdered in his house. The word rapidly spread from one excited Tremonter to another until a crowd had gathered. Milans volunteered to lead them to the site of the massacre. The agitated crowd set out for his home, led by the more agitated narrator of the story. By the time the scene of his alleged slaughter was reached the procession had assumed parade proportions.

Fortunately for him, just about the time when he was due to be embarrassed at his failure to conjure up four murdered priests, a live priest came to light. He was Father Peter Farrell, a friend of Milans who was schooled in the handling of men in delirium. Pushing his way through the now angered crowd who had been awakened from their sleep to have their appetite for sensation whetted and then ingloriously let down, Father Farrell stood before them with an amused smile as he took Milans' arm. "Can't you see he is just crazy drunk?" he asked the crowd.

And they slunk away, *sans* sensation, *sans* slaughter.

But when Milans returned to work, he was once more greeted by an irate owner who bore the news that he was to consider himself fired.

* * *

So chagrined was he at his failure, and unwilling to face again the Unusual Woman with the information that he had been discharged in disgrace, Milans determined to try his hand in new fields. He told himself that he could go away, get among new people, make a success in the new field, and then send for his wife.

He secured an assignment which took him to New England. This was on an editorial staff that was commissioned to write an industrial history of the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad. In a month, his resolve again gone bankrupt, he drank himself out of that job.

He then settled in Bridgeport, Connecticut, where he worked for a time at his trade, later becoming editor of the Southport *Chronicle*. But once again he drank himself out of his position.

When he returned to New York, drunk and broke, he had been away a year. He hunted up the Unusual Woman, who, to his surprise, received him as pleasantly and casually as though he had been downtown only for the day.

* * *

But while he had been away the Unusual Woman had done a great deal of agonized thinking. In the years that she had been playing the desperate and losing game of saving her beloved, she had played many cards. But the Demon had taken every trick so far. She had played Love, and lost. She had played Hope, and lost. She had played Prayer many times, and evidently that too had failed to win.

But in her tired heart she held one last card. It was her last. When that was gone, she must give up. Her health was fast failing and her wounded spirit could not stand more than one other thrust.

So with the reckless gesture of a luck-deserted gambler, she prepared herself to play her last card.

XI

THE UNUSUAL WOMAN LEAVES

JUST how should she go about making this one final effort to save her husband? The Unusual Woman pondered. It seemed as though every possible method had been tried in vain. She was certain that if he returned to newspaper work and his old associations he would only fail again. Was there not some other way in which he could employ himself without mingling with those men whose weaknesses tempted him to similar indulgences? She could think of none.

Then one afternoon, just when she had about racked her brain to the limit, in came her husband himself with the great news that he had found the way to financial and moral independence. He was to have a little shop all his own!

Seating himself beside her, he outlined his new project. There was a man by the name of Fritz Brieger, a saloon-keeper friend of his, whom he had persuaded to go partners with him in the purchase of a small printing shop that he had found for sale down on Fulton Street. Seeing a look of askance on her face when he mentioned "saloon-keeper," Milans hastened to inform his wife that Brieger was a fine, superior type of man who was far too decent for saloon-keeping and wanted to get out of it.

For weeks, said Milans, he had been telling Brieger of the possibilities in the printing business and had assured him that he, Milans, knew of any number of business houses whose printing jobs he could get. And today Brieger had accepted the proposition.

The Unusual Woman beamed. Here was just what she had been dreaming of. A business of his own! Why had she not thought of that? In the idea she saw emancipation from the fear of his being discharged by bosses. He would be his own boss!

Enthusiastically she entered into the plan, and went to work to help her husband make a success of the new project. She had friends in New York, and from them she raised the cash that was needed to match the amount put up by Brieger.

In the next few days Brieger gave up his saloon and became the "outside man" of the new concern, while Milans took over all responsibility for production.

Consider the ironic humour in this situation. A saloon-keeper is persuaded by one of his prize drunks to become allied with him in a new project. Drunk is joined to drunk-maker in a pursuit of the wraiths of commerce and respectability! Liquor's patron takes liquor's purveyor and sets his feet on the path of decency; a path, by the way, which ultimately leads the latter to wealth and social prominence.

Many were those amused ones who stood to one side, tongue in cheek, to see what would become of the infant concern whose proprietors had dealt so much in that which despoils success. Such doubters, however, soon witnessed a miracle of business development.

By dint of grit and energy, ability and incessant work, especially on Milans' part, the little shop flourished and grew like a garden vegetable bathed in springtime sun. Now possessed of his own little establishment, Milans' interest in his work bristled. He worked night and day, aided by the enthusiastic support of the Unusual Woman, to make the little shop a success.

Soon it became necessary to enlarge the shop and to purchase more presses and other equipment. And in less than a year the embryo concern had grown into a busy, hustling enterprise that occupied two entire floors of a building on Fulton Street.

* * *

During this time Milans kept sober. They moved to a nicer home in Brooklyn, and under the impetus of success were able to accumulate a sizable bank account. Conditions were easier now. There were no more financial worries. With a good balance in the bank to his credit and a skilled force of printers to take care of the detail of the business, Milans began to relax. And with relaxation came temptation; Milans again began to drink guardedly.

Then came differences between the partners. Brieger was not a craftsman, but he was a thorough business man. Milans was not so thorough a business man, but he was a skilled craftsman. One needed the other. But Milans could not keep sober. There were arguments and friction and the upshot of it was that he sold out his interest to his partner.

Bereft of his business, deep depression now settled on Milans. He had failed in this, his own venture, as he had failed in everything else. The keen disappointment so easily read in his wife's eyes shot him through and through with remorse. Idle hands and idle mind soon sought one thing. Taking the money from the sale of the business he squandered it recklessly on whiskey.

Came dark days, punctuated less frequently by interludes of sobriety. Whiskey had one virtue now—it provided him with an escape from his accusing self. It would obligingly blind him to things he did not care to see, deafen him to voices he did not care to hear. Up liquor's alley he endeavoured to find an exit from the monotony of being jobless, from the dreams of his ambitious days, from the memory of his prostituted genius. Dr. Jekyll fain would flee from the mind's reflection of Mr. Hyde.

* * *

At home, the Unusual Woman's faith was dying hard. During the happy months of his work in the little printing shop, with its resultant success, she had seemingly scrapped all his past failures and built on them a superstructure of hope she had felt would be rewarded. But now that this latest plan had failed (and she had declared that it was to be her last attempt to help him) what was she to do?

Still fresh in her mind was the stabbing pain she had experienced a few days ago when he had come home drunk after having remained sober for so long. Before he had left for work on the morning of this particular day, she had locked her hands behind his neck, pulled his smoothly shaven face down to hers, and standing on tiptoe had kissed him again and again, happy as she compared him now with what he had been in the days before the establishment of their "business."

"I'll be home early," he had flung back at her, as he raced away to catch his car.

Humming a happy little tune she had tripped back into their well-furnished home to plan for him a special dinner when he should return that night. As she went about her work, she kept her eyes on the hands of the clock, and when the hour of his usual home-coming approached she had everything ready. But the hand of the clock travelled well past the hour when he was due, and still he did not come. Perhaps an unexpected run of business had made it necessary for him to work a little overtime, she thought, and she ran to the kitchen to fuss with the various dishes in the attempt to keep her feast for him from spoiling. But the hours passed, the dinner grew cold, and her anxiety deepened.

Finally he did come—twenty-four hours late. She heard his step on the piazza and ran to the door to save him the trouble of searching for his keys. She flung open the door expectantly. And there her husband stood, so stupidly drunk that he scarcely sensed her presence. Stumbling over the doorstep he fell to the floor. Not strong enough to lift him, she left him there in his drunken sleep. And when she sadly threw into the garbage pail the dinner that had cost her careful thought and loving labour, she had felt that something else had fallen into the pail with it . . . her slain hopes.

* * *

What should she do now?

Her reasoning told her to leave him, but her heart bade her consider his pitiful frailties. Had he but been cruel to her, struck her, beaten her in his drunken sprees, it would have been easy to silence her heart's voice. But always he had been so remorseful, so sorry for his action, so assuring that each time was the last, that he excited in her all the sympathy of her woman's heart. And she forgave him many times over the Scriptural injunction of "seventy times seven."

Years later, and long after his conversion, she told him timidly one day that she had a confession to make. Then, blushingly, she related to him how on one occasion, when he had come home drunk and dirty and maudlin, she had slapped his face. She said she knew he would not feel it or know it and the slapping had relieved the hysteria caused by his constant failures. And she wondered if he would now forgive her. Except for this "outburst" of what she considered uncontrollable anger, the Unusual Woman was always tenderness itself.

Illness now began to follow Milans' excesses. Patiently she would nurse him through his delirium. But the time came when she could no longer pit her slender strength against his drunken paroxysms.

* * *

So, one day, utterly exhausted, she sent him to the alcoholic ward of Bellevue Hospital for treatment.

During the night that followed she could not sleep. She wondered if the attendants would give him the proper care. She worried lest they would not be as kind and gentle as she had been. She began to question whether she had done the right thing in sending him away. So the night passed.

Early morning found her at the hospital where she asked to see the physician in charge of the alcoholic ward.

"You'll have to wait," the man at the door told her. "The doctor don't get down till ten and there ain't no visiting hours in the morning."

She turned wearily away with a sigh. For two hours she paced up and down the sidewalk before the hospital. When she heard a clock in the distance strike ten, she again presented herself at the door, asking for the doctor. Grudgingly the doorman let her pass, and pointed to a door down the hall where she might wait. After an interminable period, the doctor came. He was a short man who seemed to be mostly eyes, which gazed piercingly out from the shadow of bushy eyebrows, and a towering forehead. His name was Dr. Gregory, a man with whom Milans was to meet many times in the future.

"You wanted to see me?" he asked.

She looked at him appealingly.

"Tell me what chance there is of my husband ever becoming a sober man again." She tried to steady her trembling lips with pressure from her teeth.

"You are Mrs. Milans?"

She nodded.

"Have you friends?"

"Yes."

"Then, Mrs. Milans, I would say that the best thing for you to do is to leave your husband to his own devices and go to those friends."

"You mean——?"

"I mean that the chances of his ever again being able properly to support you, to say nothing of making you happy, are almost *nil.*"

A tinge of pity came into the doctor's face as he saw the struggle his visitor was making to control herself.

"I'm sorry——" he started. But she waved him aside.

"When can I take him home?" she asked.

The doctor shrugged his shoulders. "The day after tomorrow, if you wish. But he will be back here again within thirty days unless you chain him down. I know his kind, Mrs. Milans."

* * *

The doctor's prophecy proved to have been well-grounded. In spite of the care and attention and warnings she gave him after getting him home, in a few weeks Milans was again in the alcoholic ward.

This time she did not go for him. But with a determination steeled by her rapidly failing health and her intense mental suffering at having lost the love and tender care of the man to whom she had entrusted her all, she made her preparations. She told herself that what she was about to do was cruel, but her friends had advised it and she herself felt that it might possibly bring her husband to his senses . . . and, in the end, back to her.

So one day after his long debauch, when Milans returned home, there was no wife to greet him. He found instead a note on the dining-room table. With a shaking hand he picked it up and read:

"By the time you get this note, I shall be far away. I am ill. I have gone West to friends who will care for me. I am sorry that I cannot go further with you or for you. I must go while you are away; I fear I could not leave you if I waited for you to return, for you will need me so much. I am not leaving because I do not love you any longer. God pity me, I do love you. And I'm going to pray constantly that God will do for you what I could not do."

Things blurred before his gaze. Could his eyes be deceiving him? He read the note through many times. Then, sinking his head in his arms on the table, he wept bitterly.

Life for him was gutted of hope.

XII

A FURNITURE DEAL

FOR more than a week after his wife's departure, Milans remained in the lonely house. During this time he took not a bite of food. He spent the days in an agony of helplessness, alternating between self-condemnation and self-pity. When he pondered miserably upon his treatment of the Unusual Woman, he knew there was no man so deserving of such misery, and he would heap caustic invective on his own head. But when he reflected on his loneliness and the outlook for his immediate future, he became overwhelmed with a feeling of having been gravely sinned against. Why had she deserted him in his hour of greatest need? What did her protestations of love mean?

But these feeble attempts to blame his wife for her action were only like hush money paid to an accusing conscience. Sooner or later he was forced to the admission that the cause of all his woe was to be found in himself, in his quenchless thirst, the creation of his own folly. An inner voice told him his appetite for drink had brought abortion to his career at the stage of its most healthy development. Alcohol had so tarnished the sword of genius, dulled it and warped it, that the doors of every editorial office in town were closed against him. And now finally, it was drink that had stolen from the hearthstone of his heart his dearest and best.

In yielding to temptation he knew he had placed himself in destructive hands. He had been a mere pawn at the mercy of vicious forces that gained their satisfaction in his torments. Their ruthless moves had subtracted from his life all that was good and noble and pure and true. What further could they do to him, he asked himself. What more could happen to him? God had given, and devils had taken away—everything.

* * *

When finally he left the house he betook himself to a saloon, the proprietor of which was an old acquaintance. Now abandoned by all forces that had influenced him to right, he felt that there was no further use in attempting to resist. He knew that though when fought against, liquor was a terrible foe, when yielded to, it brought what seemed for a time to be a gracious deliverance. So, taking what little money he had left, he invested it in that which alone could, he believed, now bring him relief from his misery. He drank long and deep. He drank until all his money was gone, and his credit exhausted.

Then the scheming saloon-keeper saw his chance. During the past few days he had heard the story of the Unusual Woman's "desertion" told a hundred times with variations. So now, warm-hearted friend that he was, he came to the aid of his pal and patron. Magnanimously explaining to Milans that he had always liked him, he offered, inasmuch as he himself happened to be in need of a little furniture, to "buy" the furnishings that his friend no longer needed. Hadn't Milans told him that the rent of the house would be due tomorrow, and he would have to get out? Yes. And the pay? Well, he was a little short of cash now, but would it not be the same if he paid for the furniture with whiskey to be consumed over his bar?

The bargain was struck.

Milans, having no place to stay, again came in for munificent treatment at the hands of the saloon-keeper. He was granted the use of a room upstairs over the bar, to be his to have and to hold until such time as his credit from the "sale" of the furniture ran out.

Before taking up his residence there, however, Milans managed to pause long enough between drinks to pay a last visit to the house whose sanctity was so soon to be demolished. Half drunk and muttering to himself, he wandered through the place so long hallowed to him as home, picking up a few odds and ends. Choosing some articles of his wife's wearing apparel that she had left behind, he wrapped them up in a newspaper. A bit or two of jewelry he dropped into his pocket. Leaving the house he made his way to a pawnshop, where he opened his bundle and emptied his pocket on the counter. A few minutes of dickering brought him a few dollars. With these in his pocket he hastened back to his new home where no thirst went unquenched, and where no woman's tears reproached.

The business arrangement between Milans and the saloon-keeper had not been in force many weeks before the latter began to repent of his bargain. Instead of lasting only a few days, this spree of Milans' seemed to be enjoying a long and merry life. The saloon-keeper had expected him to straighten up in a few days, curse himself for his folly and clear out, thoroughly ashamed of himself. But evidently every spark of ambition had either burned itself out or been deluged with drink. So it looked as though friend saloon-keeper's deal was not to be so advantageous after all unless something could be done to move Milans into some form of activity other than draining glass after glass of whiskey.

Finally Milans was prevailed upon to go out and hunt for work. But it was no use. In the printing shops, where he would be given a few days' work, his hands would tremble so violently as to make next to impossible such work as he was given. When he would try to write, words would fail him, ideas would float mistily by in unattainability. It was like hunting with a dog whose scent for game is lost. No shop would employ him, no paper would put him on its staff even as a reporter.

Drink became the sole interest of his life. He wanted to drink . . . drink until the fiery cravings of his body were satisfied, drink until his troubling conscience was suffocated by the fumes of alcohol, drink until all sensibility to this miserable existence was obliterated. Then he slept, only to rise and drink again. When he would try to pull himself together the thoughts of whiskey would tumble and babble in his mind like the sound of a cooling brook in the ears of a thirsty traveller.

It seemed to the saloon-keeper that Milans had made up his mind to get value received for the furniture. He saw that his pseudo-philanthropy would soon develop into real charity if he allowed this star boarder to continue his drainage of the bar and cupboard.

So one night, only a few weeks after he had taken up his residence at the saloon, Milans was told gruffly that he had exhausted his credit at the bar, the price of the furniture had been drunk up, and the debt was then and there to be considered settled.

Milans begged to be allowed to stay on, offering to do any odd jobs about the place in return for his lodging and drinks. He was accordingly assigned to such tasks as sweeping the floors, cleaning the cuspidors and polishing the brass rails. Although, in his none too frequent sober moments he was astonished at the depths to which his appetite had carried him, and amazed that he should so lose hold of himself as to allow his little home literally to go down his throat to satisfy his craving for alcohol, he soon drowned such uncomfortable broodings in the free liquor offered him as pay for his lowly tasks.

But the saloon-keeper did not give up his determination to rid himself of Milans. This insolvent business associate was not a good advertisement for the place. So one night, after hatching in his mind a reasonable excuse for his action, he literally kicked out of the saloon his collaborator in the furniture deal.

* * *

Arising from the sidewalk, Milans sobered for a moment. Realizing that the doors of the saloon were closed against him, he almost unconsciously turned his footsteps toward the place he had known as home. Then recollection came to him, and in bitterness he reflected that he had no home. Nobody to care. Whether he was drunk or sober, whether he lived or died, it was the same—nobody to care. And he, who had walked and talked with the best of men, had just been brutally expelled from a low saloon! Now passersby, instead of respectfully touching their hats as they went by, drew away from him as though he were a leper.

If only there were someone to care!—to help, to advise, to comfort him. But the Unusual Woman was gone. And from nobody else could he expect anything but the hard words and hard looks they now gave him . . . the rightful inheritance of his miserable weakness.

If the drunkard ever needs anything to drive him to farther limits of despair, his treatment by his moral fellows will readily fill the bill. To endure the disgustful looks of men, the drawing aside of skirts of women, the mocking jeers of children; to hear the slamming of doors in the face, to receive the curt or contemptuous refusals of aid; to walk on through the streets, on and on through a downpour of rain, slinking through slush and cold, a recipient of taunts and sneers, kicks and jeers—anything but a kindly word and a helping hand . . . this experience can but harden the soul of man, turn his heart to granite and his blood to gall.

* * *

Sinking his chin in his chest Milans slunk off into the night—homeless, penniless and half drunk. Hardly conscious of the direction he had been taking, he found himself at length in the leafy quietness of City Hall Park, which faces Newspaper Row.

Seating himself on one of the benches, he lifted his eyes to the lights gleaming from the many windows of the great newspaper buildings across the street. He knew that behind those windows was the humming activity of what was to him the greatest business in the world. There the ends of the earth congregated to deposit their stories of romance, adventure, life. There sat the men whose fingers were constantly on the pulse of the world, whose minds fashioned credos for thousands, whose voices spoke and were quickly obeyed.

And as he mused, memory suddenly broke through the levee of his drink-clouded mind and flooded the bottom lands of his soul. *He* had once sat in those seats of the mighty! *His* brain had once directed the destinies of one of those great moulders of public opinion! He had often stood at the windows of those comfortable offices, looking down at this park, then taking up his pen, had cried out against a society that allowed those wretches who trod its paths to be so miserable. But, he reflected, then he had been up, looking down. Now he was down, irretrievably down, looking up. With half audible groans of regret he compared his wretched condition with the honourable work he had once done.

He had tested the extremes of Park Row as had few other men. He had known two worlds; had known them both well and intimately. He had tasted glory and defeat, exaltation and abasement, joy and sorrow. And because of knowledge of the one he could never be content with the other. He had been a moral commuter. He had gone up on the elevated train of ambition and resolve and love . . . slowly but steadily, and in the light. But he had always come back on the subway of despondency and fear and lust . . . swiftly, breathlessly. It seemed that his whole life had been made up of journeys to the upper and nether worlds.

But now he knew that his travels were over. He had arrived at what seemed likely to be life's terminus—the miserable consummation of what had promised to be a brilliant life.

* * *

He turned his eyes away from the heights with their visions of what had been, and, rising to his feet, shuffled off in resignation to his lot.

He had made a decision. Most decisions require strength of purpose for their fulfilment, but this one asked only for a complete yielding of every contrary impulse.

His surrender was complete. His back was to Park Row and its successes. His eyes had ceased to look up, and they now looked down at his feet. And his feet were turned in the direction of the Bowery, that graveyard of ambition, that tomb of hope, that mausoleum of love.

Ambition, hope, love! In him these things had died. And Henry Milans was on his way to bury his dead.

XIII

THE BOWERY

TO appreciate the atmosphere in which Henry F. Milans lived for the next two and a half years, one must know something of bum life on New York City's Bowery as he found it in 1908.

The Bowery, at the time of his advent into his exile of deepest shame, was—the Bowery. That is to say, it was the actual home of all the vice, poverty and crime to which it owes its unenviable reputations. There is not much left in these modern times of prohibition, prosperity, and propitious morality to remind one of the hell-roaring street of a few decades ago. The "rubberneck" buses still carry their loads of wide-eyed adventurers who somehow catch a vicarious thrill from proximity to scenes of past sinfulness, but the old street seems to blink back indignantly at the megaphone man's insinuations of present day wickedness.

This is not to infer, however, that the Bowery is now a transformed paradise. It has not by any means regained the pristine beauty that inspired its original owner, Peter Stuyvesant, to call that part of his estate "the bouwerie." There is still squalor and poverty and misery there. But compared with what it was in the infant years of the twentieth century, one is forced to admit that, whatever the cause, the Bowery has "gone moral."

It will be generally conceded, moreover, even by those who for political or other reasons oppose prohibition, that the absence of saloons, with their cheap liquor and the kindred vices that always trail it, is mainly responsible for the change. It is true that liquor may still be had at any of the numerous speak-easies, but there is not so much that is cheap.

* * *

Gone is much of the former drama of the section. In the old days the Bowery abounded in those characters who tinged poverty and vice with romance, such as Spike O'Day who pawned his peg-leg each morning and retrieved it at night with his beggar's spoils. Seldom in this day does one see such characters as the "dummy-chucker," whose fake fits thrown in front of places like "Beefsteak John's" brought him sympathy that clinked.

Those were the days when the Bowery swarmed with poets gone mad with dipsomania, hollowed-eyed and chalky-faced dope addicts who once had been somebody, bedraggled old women who shrilly screamed their imprecations on passersby, young girls who would huckster their very souls for drink—famished ghosts whose real selves had snatched at life and missed.

* * *

Another institution of the by-gone days was the "reliever shop." In these cellar hutches the outcast would exchange his shoes for a pair a little more worn to obtain in addition the price of a drink. O. O. McIntyre, than whom no one perhaps knows New York better, says that from Chatham Square, where the Bowery begins, to Cooper Square, where it ends, there is not a "reliever shop" left.

But to Milans the "reliever shop" was often a happy expedient for procuring a drink. Occasionally somebody, a friend out of the past or some one convinced by his appearance that he was no ordinary tramp, would give him clothes. Milans would wear them for a few hours with an awakened desire to live again the life of prosperity that the garments suggested, but with his approaching appetite, habit would overcome habiliments, and he would be off to a "reliever's" to exchange his suit for an older one and the price of a few more drinks.

* * *

Gone, too, are those iniquitous cesspools, such as "The Doctor's," where one beer was served with two straws, and "third rail" whiskey was a nickel a shot with a back room "flop" thrown in.

These places were commonly known as "dead-houses." The dead-house was the bum's headquarters. It was made by the bum, of the bum and for the bum. Here he would meet his pals. Here they would plan together clever schemes for panhandling the price of a drink. They would take great pains in fixing up a "cripple," tying his legs or arms close to his body, leaving an empty trouser leg or coat sleeve to make its mute appeal to tender-hearted passersby. Then when these "cripples" came in from their day's work the proceeds would be pooled, dividends declared, and all would line up at the bar for their five-cent whiskey, which, by the way, was hardly more than cheap poison. It was a highly diluted brand of the cheapest liquor whose "kick" was generally supplied by the introduction of chemicals. Its effect on the human system can be imagined.

The spending of a little money in one of these dead-houses gave the bum the privilege of eating and, in the winter months, sleeping "on the house." Free lunch, consisting usually of bone or potato soup, was served to every customer. And if one carefully scheduled his rounds he might get several of these lunches in a day, as luncheon-time was not the same at all places. The bum's genius consisted in making for himself a mental time-table, scheduling his arrival at the various free lunch counters at the hour for "eats."

The bum's sleeping requirements were taken care of in a back room or cellar of the dead-house. Often as many as fifty or more occupied one of these rooms at the same time. Such places were invariably alive with almost every kind of vermin. The bum might sleep here, if he was able to sleep, until five o'clock in the morning at which time he was aroused and ejected so that the place might be cleaned out for the day's business.

Each dead-house had its official "bouncer." When a bum got too unruly or belligerent, as was often the case with a novice at the profession, he was promptly kicked out. After a few well-bestowed kicks by these bouncers, the bum's walk thereafter was certain to be of humbler mien.

* * *

During the summer months, the bum usually forsook his dormitory at the dead-house for the park, or other open air sleeping place. The wise bum knew of several select places for sleep, and was careful to cultivate friendships with watchmen and others in authority.

Among the places where Milans had exclusive sleeping rights was an old boiler in Dover Street. Another was a certain warehouse near Brooklyn Bridge, and still another was a loading platform in that same section. On occasion he was also granted sleeping privileges on the piers, sometimes with a tarpaulin supplied to protect him against inclement weather. The watchmen on the piers gave him more leeway than they granted other bums, because they knew he would respect their one rule, not to smoke.

When the nights were excessively hot, the dwellers in bumdom would repair to the City Hall steps. Here each man would carefully spread out a newspaper, and with the nonchalance of a millionaire approaching his couch of eiderdown would lay him down to sleep.

Milans has often said that in all his weary months on the Bowery he was never able to discover why the bum must have his newspaper on which to lie before he could court slumber. It is certain that the paper is not used to prevent his clothes becoming soiled, for they are always dirtier than any steps or any other outdoor sleeping place to which he had access. But Milans was not out to wage a campaign against the customs of bums, so he too acquired the newspaper habit. One may judge the character of his thoughts, when he was able to think at all, upon discovering that his only bedding was a copy of his own *Mercury,* or *Tribune,* or *Recorder.*

* * *

The types that inhabited the Bowery at this time were as diverse as humanity itself. If a census had been taken it would have revealed that almost every profession and trade known to man was represented. Milans met and associated with doctors, lawyers, men of science, educators and others.

These were men on whom drink had fastened its tentacles, and who came to the Bowery to hide themselves where their families would never look for them, where they might have their spree on the quiet. Some would stay only long enough to recover from a few days' drunken bout, after which they would return to their homes with the understanding that they had been away on vacation or to recover from a spell of sickness. But there were others, like Milans, who had given up in despair to their appetites, and who had almost sunk to the level of beasts, with no thought or hope or ambition save to quench their quenchless thirst.

In the social register of the Bowery all men were equal. Drink was the great leveller. It had banded together merchant and thief, professor and illiterate, jurist and criminal. Though having come from widely differing stations of life they were now united in a great brotherhood of hopelessness, in that vast freemasonry of those who have become society's outcasts—flotsam and jetsam on life's sea. They formed a miserable coterie with a common purpose, namely, the obtaining of a drink.

* * *

The Bowery was not without its female bums as well. The women were even dirtier and lower than the men. All too often when men reach what they suppose to be the rock bottom of degradation, women come along to demonstrate that there are deeper depths.

Milans met many of these female bums, on the Bowery and in Brooklyn. They often would join with groups of men to plan methods for getting money, and in these they were frequently even more adept than the men. In such a congregation there was no thought of sex. They were simply business associates, creatures of a common habit, drinking together, begging money and dividing the profits. Among these women bums were many criminals, not a few of whom were exceedingly sharp-witted.

Sometimes a clique of bums would form what was known as an "ink-pot." These would make their headquarters in some unoccupied room or vacant house to which, if necessary, they would gain entrance by force. From here they would disperse to get money by various ruses. With the money begged, stolen, or occasionally earned, they would purchase whiskey for all, whereupon the "ink-pot" would become the scene of a drunken debauch that lasted until the money was spent and the bums sufficiently sobered to venture forth in search of further funds. The physical and moral results of such an arrangement can readily be understood.

* * *

When one thinks on these surroundings, it requires no little stretch of imagination to picture Henry F. Milans, him of the brilliant brain and kindly heart, as a voluntary resident of the Bowery and among such human debris. After dwelling on the picture of the innocent and fun-loving lad, the dutiful son, the young man of genius, the indulgent husband, the successful editor, it is no easy matter to switch the mental vision to take in a scene so sordid as that of Milans on the Bowery.

But such is the power of an evil habit yielded to.

XIV

ANDY—A FRIEND

ON the night of his departure with such enforced suddenness from the premises of his saloon-keeper "friend," Milans paid his first visit to "The Doctor's," previously referred to as one of the most notorious dead-houses of that time. In spite of his half-drunk condition and his already much-lowered standards, he could but feel a revulsion at his first sight of the place.

He found "The Doctor's" crowded with men—or more precisely, with the wrecks of men—whose lungs exuded stifling fumes of the alcohol with which they were saturated and whose ragged clothes were unable to contain the sickening odours of their filthy bodies. In the back rooms those who were fortunate enough to have drunk themselves past consciousness of their misery sat in a state of coma, or pillowed their heads in their arms on dirty tables. All about were other men in various stages of intoxication. Some were engaged in angry dispute. Some drunkenly sang songs unassociated with hymnology. Others, muttering to themselves, swayed timorously about the room. Now and then a couple reached the fighting drunk stage and entered into fierce combat, rolling over and over on the dirty floor until they were separated and ousted by the "bouncer." All of this contributed to a conglomerate bedlam that cannot be imagined by one who has never witnessed it.

Amid these surroundings at "The Doctor's" Milans sat out the long hours of his first night on the Bowery. Musing and miserable. And drowning both musing and misery in drink.

By nature and training, Milans was not a bum. Mention has been made before of the trait of independence so prominent in his character. He had never begged. From early boyhood, he had prided himself on being able to earn his way. But when strong drink broke down his will, it succeeded also in thoroughly disintegrating his entire nature.

And now that he had cast his lot with the Bowery bums he was confronted with the necessity of getting the price of his drinks in the accepted bum style. He must beg. But he did not know how to go about it. The art of panhandling he had never before found either necessary or desirable of cultivation.

* * *

In those first months on the Bowery Milans would have fared badly indeed had it not been for Andy.

Milans met Andy at "The Doctor's." It was on the morning following that first awful night. Nauseated and burning with desire for a drink, Milans had sauntered up to the bar and called for a beer. Beside him stood a little, wizened, rat-faced man with eyes in which lurked the sagacity and craftiness of one who lives by his wits. When the bartender set the glass down before him, Milans fumbled in his pockets for money that was not there. The bartender's lip curled in a sneer, and he reached out his hand to take back the glass of foaming drink, cursing the while.

But the little man, who had been watching the discomfiture of Milans, put out his hand and sent a coin spinning across the counter.

"Here you are," he said with a humorous twinkle in the eyes that sparkled like those of an impertinent sparrow. "Give him the beer and take the price out of this."

Milans grasped the glass eagerly and the pair slouched over to the free lunch counter. Here he noticed the little man dexterously concealing handfuls of food in his tattered garments with one hand while with the other he ate eagerly, keeping all the while a watchful eye on the bartender who was busy with other customers. But when Milans tried the trick the bartender's eye caught sight of the disappearing food, and he came cursing from behind the bar with threats of violence. The twain effected a hasty exit.

Outside the saloon, the little man ruefully surveyed the cause of their expulsion.

"I guess you ain't used to this life, partner," he said.

Milans agreed, more ashamed now that his effort had revealed him as clumsy and inefficient than that he had ventured to get something for nothing.

"Well, you'd better stick with me. You'll soon learn. My name's Andy."

* * *

Thus began a companionship that lasted for many months. Andy was the first and only intimate friend of Milans' life on the Bowery. Wise in the ways of one who reaps where he sows not, quick witted and active as a fox terrier, both hard-boiled and tender-hearted as occasion demanded, Andy was nevertheless a true friend whom Milans even now remembers with affection.

There must have been something of the parental instinct in Andy. With the care of a father for a helpless child he watched over Milans, endeavouring to teach his big charge the rudiments of the game. He instructed

Milans in the psychology of begging, in which he himself was a past master.

For instance, he told him that morning was the best time of day for obtaining money. To illustrate his theory, Andy would strike an attitude of a man coming down to work, having had a satisfactory breakfast, smoking a fat cigar, and feeling that everything was all right with the world. He sees a poor, ragged bum, obviously hungry, who probably had had no breakfast at all, or certainly not as sumptuous a one as that of which he had himself just partaken. He feels superior, indulgent. Magnanimously he tosses a coin to the bum and goes off to work, imagining himself a philanthropist. And the day is brighter for them both.

Then there was Wall Street, said this mentor of mendicancy. It was always good in the afternoon. Men who had had a good day at the Stock Market, going home half-pickled, could always be trusted to be liberal.

Andy may not have had to excess any other kind of learning, but he was a keen student of human nature, and, in addition, possessed histrionic talents that would have been the envy of many a struggling actor. These arts he tried to teach Milans.

But Andy soon became convinced that Milans would never make a success of begging. Either he could not, or would not, act. Besides, he was too corpulent of body, too healthy-looking. His size did not induce sympathy. Too often his approaches met only with a surly challenge to go and work. So after the teacher had mournfully regarded his pupil's several ineffective efforts, he gave it up. "Too big to beg," philosophically decided Andy, and he would send Milans around the corner while he used his consumptive cough and thin bent form to make the passerby's heart to bleed and his pocket to empty.

* * *

To Andy, Milans was in many respects a sort of idyllic hero, a superior representative from a remote world that he, Andy, had gazed upon only from a distance. The little fellow saw in his pal the evidence of superior breeding and Milans' manner of speech particularly beguiled him. When on rare occasions he was able to down the irrepressible urge to chatter, he would listen enraptured to the well-bred comment from Milans. Then, unable to hold his peace longer, he would break in to remark, "Gee, but you can talk swell!"

For many months the little man exerted for his pal the only kind of love of which he was capable, that of watching over him and providing for him. When Milans became hungry it was often Andy who found food for him. When the chill of winter storms sent them shivering in search of shelter, it was Andy who found for him the warmest spot on the grating through which heat came pouring from some subterranean boiler-room. Often Andy had to shove aside earlier arrivals to make room for his pal, but he somehow managed to secure for Milans the best the Bowery had to offer its bums.

* * *

Now and then, Milans, of course, would do his bit toward providing for the needs of the partnership, and his concessions to the firm's exchequer, while less frequent than Andy's, were usually of greater value. Occasionally he would stumble across a friend of his prosperous days, who with words of advice and counsel would give him from one to five dollars, sometimes more. Then the pair would feast and drink until the last cent was gone before worrying again anent free lunches and dead-houses.

Down on Fourth Avenue was a bakery whose proprietor gave away day-old bread to bums. Now and then when they had no money for whiskey with its free lunch, Milans and Andy would resort to the bread-line to satisfy the pangs of hunger.

On one cold night they took their places in the line and, after what seemed to Milans an eternity, they arrived at the little platform from which the bread was being distributed. A half loaf of bread and a tin cup of steaming hot coffee were pushed into his hands. Dumbly Milans accepted the *largesse.* Then, by chance, he lifted his eyes to the man who had bestowed the bread. But he did not see him, he saw instead another, a younger man, standing beside him. Milans started, regarded the young man more closely, then hung his head and stepped away from the line into the darkness. But he had gone only a few yards when he felt a hand on his arm.

"Say, Milans," said the young man. "I didn't recognize you at first. What in God's name are you doing here?" He was a newspaper man, one of the many youngsters Milans had trained, and who now was holding a responsible position on a leading newspaper. He had evidently come down to write up the bread-line for his paper.

Ashamed, Milans made no reply.

"Here, throw away that bread. Here's a five-spot. Go get yourself some real food. Then get cleaned up and come to the office tomorrow and I'll put you on to a good job."

Meetings of this kind happened quite frequently, and though they usually brought unsolicited money they made Milans more and more dissatisfied with his lot. After such contacts with his former life, Milans would determine to use the money given him to effect a return to decency, only to have his resolve fail him when faced with his thirst. And instead of using the money as he intended, he invariably would go into a long debauch, which would last until every nickel had been spent and which in most cases wound up with a cot in Bellevue Hospital.

* * *

Late one evening, as he and Andy were shuffling toward the pier under which they expected to spend the night, Milans heard his name called. Glancing out of one corner of a bleary eye he saw his former partner in the printing firm of "Milans and Brieger." Dropping his head in shame, Milans walked on as though he had not heard. But Brieger caught up with him, and placed a restraining hand on his shoulder.

"Milans," he said, "I want to help you to get a fresh start. Will you let me?"

"No use," replied Milans, "There isn't a chance of my remaining sober enough to work."

But Brieger launched into an earnest argument on the affirmative side of the subject, and though he could not win the other entirely away from his hopelessness, he did succeed in exacting a promise that he would come to the printing office the next morning.

That night, under an East River pier, Milans pondered the matter. When he awoke in the morning there was a glimmer of hope in his heart. He aroused Andy and told him that he was through with bumming. He would get a job. He was going to be a man again. Andy looked at him for a long moment, unable to comprehend the logic of any fellow who preferred work to the care-free life of the Bowery. But he would not stand in the way of a pal's desires. So they shook hands solemnly, Milans warmly thanking the little man for his kindness.

"So long, Andy," said Milans, tightening his grip on his friend's grimy hand.

"So long, buddy," replied Andy.

Thus they separated, not to meet again for several years, and then under widely differing circumstances.

Arrived at the big plant that had once been his own, Milans was offered twenty dollars to work the first week, after which he would be given a real chance if he made good. Brieger set a workman to watch him during that week, and Milans was successful in staying fairly sober until the Saturday, when he was given the promised twenty dollars. With this young fortune in his pocket, he had all the feelings of a prince among men.

Again the workman was detailed to watch over him while he sought out some fresh clothing in the second-hand stores. Within an hour he had attired himself once more in a respectable manner. The workman, his duty done, bade Milans good-bye until Monday, and Milans set out with a new spring to his step. It was good to be clean, to be unashamed to walk head up among his fellows.

But the inevitable happened when he passed a bar. The old craving flared within him, and soon he was again helplessly drunk, his money all gone. When he came to himself, sick and penniless, he made his way to a "reliever shop" where he exchanged his good clothes for habiliments more befitting the Bowery. Again in rags, he looked down at himself in disgust and discouragement.

When he once again plunged into drink to drown his despair, the debit side of his ledger showed not a whit gained by his week's respite from drunkenness. But though he had not much to lose, the credit side of the ledger recorded what was to him a serious loss—the loss of his one and only true Bowery friend, Andy, the bum.

XV

THE PAINTED COAT

OF the life of Milans on the Bowery there are a host of incidents containing tragedy, pathos, and even humour, which might be told to the interest and entertainment of the reader. But for the confines of this book, a story or two must suffice.

Reference has already been made to Milans' love for the organ. This attraction often led him to church, to hide himself away in some remote corner where he might listen unobserved to the music that soothed his soul and quieted his spirit.

During a certain period he had been sleeping for a time in Washington Square Park, down in the Fourth Street section. While there he learned that in a Methodist church nearby there was employed as organist a man who had been a close friend of the Unusual Woman. Milans remembered him when he was just beginning his studies of the organ. The Unusual Woman had helped the man considerably with his music lessons. Milans was overwhelmed with a desire to hear him play, now as a competent professional. He wanted, too, to hear some of the old hymns sung . . . hymns which he and the Unusual Woman had sung together around the organ at home in the days now alive only in memory.

But he looked at his clothes. They were so soiled and ragged that he was afraid the ushers would throw him out if he attempted to enter the church as he was. But one Sunday, after having carefully brushed his tattered rags and washed his face and hands, he mustered enough courage to sneak in when nobody was looking. He sought out the last seat under the gallery where it was dark and where a door was handy in case he had to get out in a hurry, by invitation. He evidently was not observed, however, for he was able to enjoy the whole of the service without being molested.

Encouraged by his success as an unchallenged churchgoer, he assayed to walk bravely out with the rest. Then came the commotion. People stopped still beside their pews, drew aside to let him pass with plenty of elbow room. Nobody crowded him, but all stared and fell silent, as though they were beholding an apparition. Then a few suppressed titters reached his ears. He tried to stroll toward the door after the manner of the most polite church exit, but the stares of the congregation seemed to pierce him through and through.

Then he became conscious that the gaze of the brethren and sisters was concentrated on his back. Finally gaining the door he hurried away, and as soon as he reached a convenient alley he tore off his coat to investigate the cause of the church disturbance.

He found it.

The back of his coat had been painted a brilliant red!

He was filled with such a sense of mortification as he had not experienced for a long while. Then he remembered his mistake in communicating to some of his bum friends his church-going intentions. They evidently had desired that he should attend in style and, obtaining some thick red paint, had decorated his tattered coat to distinguish him from the average worshipper. The plan had worked to perfection . . . he was a man set apart!

Undaunted, however, Milans acquired another coat and attended the church several times. But though he was not recognized as the creator of the painted coat disturbance, nobody took pains enough either to show him to a seat or to invite him to return the next Sunday. Church officers would stand near the door to welcome and bid "good day" to the worshippers, but none reached out his hand to Milans. Announcements were made that a revival meeting was soon to take place in the church, but nobody troubled to inquire whether Milans would attend.

In the Spring following his conversion, Milans again visited this church. But now he came dressed as a prosperous gentleman. Ushers greeted him at the door, and with marked respect directed him to a seat up front. After the sermon the pastor hurried down to welcome him.

"You are a stranger here?" he asked, bowing.

"Oh no," replied Milans. "I've been here a number of times."

Then he reminded the minister of "the man with the painted coat" and spoke of his subsequent visits. "But nobody spoke to me so kindly then," he added.

He was a good man, that pastor. He grasped Milans' hand again, and with his voice trembling in real humility, said, "Sir, you make me blush for the ushers and myself. May I plead for your forgiveness?"

It is not likely afterwards that other men poorly dressed were ignored by that preacher. Milans told him of his life, his shame, his conversion. And from that time he and the pastor were intimate friends.

* * *

Milans has often said that of all the drunkards he ever knew he was the most unfortunate. When he was not overrun with an unusually large slice of ordinary "hard luck" he found himself entangled in the meanest and most embarrassing of predicaments.

A couple of incidents will bear out this claim.

One bright Summer morning he awoke from a sound sleep on the sidewalk of West Third Street. Having gone to sleep half drunk, he came out of slumberland by degrees. But as he emerged he felt a trifle more chilly than such weather was wont to make one feel. Looking down at his person he was surprised and horrified to find himself much more scantily clad than when he had succumbed to Morpheus. During the night some thief had divested him of all his outer clothing and of his shoes, and now he stood to his feet clothed only in his embarrassment and a dirty old union suit.

Most persons experience such predicaments only in dreams, and afterward laugh over them; but this was no dream for Milans.

To make matters worse, there was no place open at that hour to which an unclothed man might flee for refuge and clothing. So he had to walk a full mile, his bare feet pattering on the sidewalk and his underwear fluttering in the morning breeze, before he could find a place to replenish his simple wardrobe.

And, as though that were not enough, at that very hour and place hundreds of good Catholics were wending their way to early Mass! Arrived at an old second-hand store, Milans faced further dilemma; not a man's shirt was to be had in the store. So, as nudity cannot be too particular, he had to substitute a woman's shirt waist—frills, pleats, lace and all.

Picture him!

* * *

Now for a happening that stands out in his mind as embracing one of the keenest disappointments of his life.

It was mid-winter. The thermometer was in the neighborhood of zero, and a cold, raw wind was blowing. Milans had walked up from the Battery to the Bowery Mission. Hot soup was to be distributed to the bums, after which they would be allowed to sleep downstairs in the warm cellar. A long line had formed in front of the building, awaiting entrance. Milans took his place in the line, shivering.

He waited over an hour in the biting weather, so starved and cold that he thought he would perish. Finally he arrived at the head of the line, hunger and cold gnashing at his vitals like the slavering jaws of a hound. But just as he was about to step inside the gate, a man shouted, "All full; can't let in any more tonight!" and the iron gate slammed in his face.

Milans shuffled away, wondering bitterly if Heaven would be like that . . . all full, no more room, bums must stay out in the cold.

* * *

No punishment of Hell could have been worse for Milans than the remorse that tore at him during the hours when he was sober enough to realize his present condition, and from what he had fallen.

Indeed, in his saner moments he often prayed and wished for death to come. Certainly, he thought, the next world could hold no greater afflictions than this. Hell might have fire, but was not his whole body constantly aflame with the torturing fires of an evil appetite? Hell might have remorse, but could it be more biting than that which abode with him day and night?

It was well that this condition of mind persisted. Had Milans ever arrived at contentment with life in the Bowery, he would have been lost. He now insists that the chastening remorse of those days was simply the voice of God keeping awake in him the spark of desire for good. The prayers of Mother Milans and the Unusual Woman were beginning to prevail.

Never did he get to the point of satisfaction with his loathsome surroundings. They sickened him, they made him hate himself for his utter inability to lift himself by the insufficient bootstraps of his own will power and desire for good. Sodden with whiskey as he was, he could never acclimate his spirit to this land of despair.

His fellows in distress disgusted him. Companionable only that he might get another drink by being so, he found no relish in the society of these who like himself were society's cast-offs. In them and in their speech and action he saw his own haggard and miserable reflection. So he would not look upon them save through eyes hazy from alcohol.

Had he only been able to dispose of memory, his conscious hours would have been more bearable. But memory, laden with persistent and haunting echoes, kept alive those things and persons that he had so sorely sinned against in coming here.

* * *

There were times when, in a half-drunken stupor, his mind would create visions on the walls of the dead-houses. Like a projection machine, his memory would choose scenes of the past and throw them before him. He would see Mother Milans at prayer, or himself in innocence climbing into her lap. Then again he would catch a vision of Miss Cornelia and the infant class in Washington, and of himself, reciting or singing "Little drops of water," "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild," and the like. Most poignant of all would be the constantly reappearing face of the Unusual Woman—sad, tear-stained, pleading. And above all the bedlam of the dead-house would come the haunting music of those beautiful hymns they had sung together, memory's accompaniment to memory's pictures.

At other times he would look about the dead-house, and contrast this hovel with the pretty little nest on his honeymoon days. He would compare the pure, trusting, sweet face of the Unusual Woman with the bloated, sin-twisted countenances of these denizens of the Bowery. He would contrast the connivings and double-crossings of these members of life's lowest stratum with the love of life and the sanctity of home. He would think of his beggary and dependence upon the charity of others, and then of the successful independence of his earlier days.

His only escape from such vagaries of memory was in drink and more drink. Consciousness brought him to a desolate land, filled with the icy floes of necessity, the raw winds of memory. But drunkenness transported him, like a magic carpet, to that balmy plane between life and death where there is grim release from worry and responsibility and the past. Therefore, he did his best to stay drunk. When memory would come in like a flood, he relied upon alcohol to lift up a standard against it.

* * *

One day, after having been without the anaesthetic aid of drink, and as a result almost mad from the remorse that complete consciousness brought to him, he was encountered by a lawyer friend who gave him a couple of dollars. He gripped the money with eagerness, his mind reflecting that here was forty drinks.

Parenthetically, let it here be said that Milans had achieved a mental readjustment of money values which caused him to think of a dollar, not in terms of twenty five-cent pieces, but in terms of twenty drinks. In looking at a piece of money it never entered his mind that here was so much silver or gold; it was only so many drinks of cheap whiskey.

So, tightly holding his "forty drinks" in his hand, he set out to realize on them. Starting from West Broadway he walked or reeled as far as Jefferson market prison, every saloon on the way contributing its share of drinks in exchange for some of the two dollars. Arrived at the prison, he fell to the street, unable to navigate further under his own power.

It is interesting to note here that on the very corner where he toppled to the gutter in what was to be his last act of inebriety, The Salvation Army held its street services. One morning, many months after his conversion, coming upon an Army open-air meeting there, he stepped into the ring, and stood and prayed with the Salvationists —prayed on the identical spot where he had fallen for the last time, drunk.

From this spot he was taken to Bellevue Hospital. The end of Henry F. Milans, drunkard and Bowery bum, was approaching.

XVI

INCURABLE!

A VISIT to the alcoholic ward of Bellevue Hospital in 1910 was a visit to a charnel house of living death. One cannot think of any other earthly view so like a cross-sectional glimpse of hell as this place with its hundreds of dipsomaniacs gone mad through drink. Here were to be found the prize exhibits of Demon Rum's craft, his finished products. Ticketed by society as incorrigible they came from every walk of life to the hospital, an average of two hundred new cases daily, grim testimonials to man's inability to conquer himself when assailed by the drink devil.

Milans was no stranger to Bellevue. He had, during the past few years, paid it many visits. Indeed he had come to feel almost as much at home in its alcoholic ward as in the dead-houses on the Bowery. Although recollections of the place, like the memory of his life during these dark years, are painful to call to mind, they are intensely vivid. He has often said that the screams of men in delirium tremens, their pitiful begging for just a drop of liquor, their howls that were just the forerunner of an alcoholic coma to be ended in death, made in his mind dismal records that he will never be able to banish.

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To one viewing the sights offered here it would seem that all the dirt and filth of the world had been gathering on the bodies of these men whom alcohol had claimed as its own. Consecrated indeed must be the hands and hearts of these nurses and attendants who give their lives to cleaning and scrubbing inside and out those human rubbish-heaps for whom cleanliness has long since lost its attraction.

While in the hospital on one occasion, Milans met a man who had a wide and mysterious black band around his torso. The attendants were non-plussed at first at being unable to wash it off. They finally got from the man the admission that two years before he had undergone an operation, after which he had been strapped with a band of adhesive tape . . . and he had never troubled to remove it! For part of the two years he had worked in a coal-yard; the black dust had ground into the plaster, creating the grimy band whose removal called for the most energetic application of the strongest of hospital cleansers.

The duties of these ministers of mercy were made doubly difficult by the bums' horror of water and soap. They would often fight like demons to prevent the attendants giving them a bath.

* * *

During his many sojourns in Bellevue, Milans had seen many a man die. The victim would come in first with delirium tremens. Attendants would strap him securely to a cot. Then the delirium would pass to give way to a sickening, burning thirst. After the first torture of a famished system tuned to be slaked only by the cheap, burning, brain-rotting, soul-destroying potions, the patient usually lapsed into a coma for three or four days before death. From this state it was almost impossible to rouse him, his lungs slowly filling up with the poison with which his system was charged. Soon a nurse would place a screen about the cot, and Milans would know that another poor wretch's earthly struggles were over.

After a time a couple of attendants would come with a seven-foot basket, there would be the dull thump of the body, and Milans would turn his head away as they carried out the basket to be taken to the morgue, where the body would be held for a few days for identification. Then, if unclaimed, the remains of the unknown one would be carried up the river to Hart's Island for burial in Potter's Field.

As he had seen his fellow unfortunates carried out one by one, never to return, Milans invariably had asked himself the question: "Shall I be the next?" But on all previous occasions he had somehow managed to rally strength enough to deprive the Grim Reaper of his prey for a while longer.

* * *

When he awakened after this last spree, however, he believed that his end was near. He was tired of the struggle, a struggle in which there had been nothing but defeat. He was weary of the same old round of misery of body, and torture of conscience. Once he had hoped ultimately to fight his way back to sobriety and health. Now those hopes had been long dead. He knew what was the inevitable for him. As with all the rest—a series of rapier-like thrusts of appetite, then coma, then a gurgle and a gasp, then a screen about his cot, a thud in a wicker basket, a waiting for identification that would never be made because nobody cared, a river trip, and then Hart's Island.

Then? Was there something else? Possibly. Anyway, it could not be worse.

But the days dragged on and death did not come. Suddenly he noticed that the doctors and nurses were kinder, more attentive. He wondered if this was because they wanted to make his last days as comfortable as possible.

Occasionally visitors would approach his cot, men who bore the appearance of physicians, and bookish-looking men, who, after surveying him for a few moments would turn aside to whisper. Milans wondered at the extra attention shown him until he was moved to another ward for special study and observation. Then he knew the why of their interest; he was to be placed on display as a laboratory exhibit, a clinical specimen.

* * *

One day the head of the psychopathic ward came into the ward where Milans lay. He was Dr. Gregory, the man who had spoken with the Unusual Woman many months before. Word had come to him from one of the internes that Milans was in the observation ward. Seating himself on the side of the cot, he talked gently and kindly to the patient. Milans told him the whole story of his bitter struggle with his habit, hoping wistfully that this man skilled in medicine might have some message of hope for him. But Dr. Gregory, after sitting silently for a few minutes at the conclusion of Milans' words, reached out his hand and patting that of his patient, simply said:

"I'm sorry for you, Milans. Sorry for your own sake and that of your wife. But there's nothing we can do for you. You've gone too far. I'm sorry."

That was the first official admission of medical science's impotence that he heard from a medical man.

* * *

A few days later he was visited by another doctor. This one's face bore the resemblance of saintliness, mingled with professional skill. The full, white, prophet-like beard and sympathetic eyes inspired just another small glimmer of hope in Milans' breast. He was convinced by this man's appearance that here was a good Christian, and the day being the Sabbath, he felt sure that the kindly-faced doctor was even now on his way to church. For a moment the man stood before him, shaking his head slowly.

"You're in bad shape, my friend!"

He asked Milans questions concerning himself and his habit. Then slowly, and with that same hopeless shake of the head, he said: "It's too bad that there is nothing that can be done for you."

Milans made no attempt to speak, but he shut his eyes tightly together and turned wearily on his pillow. Medical science had made its second pronouncement of its inability to cope with his case.

When the doctor had left, Milans, in his disappointment, reflected bitterly on the kindly man's failure to kindle the spark of hope that his appearance had aroused. Doubtless he and the others *were* powerless to deal with his case. Yet the doctor had looked so like a Christian. Why did he not lead him to One who could help? Or was there such an One? What of those teachings of Mother Milans? Were they true or were they poetic fancies with which all mothers amuse their children? Possibly so, thought Milans, reverting to his melancholia. Whatever spark of faith existed in his breast was dimly glimmering.

A few days later came what seemed to be its final extinguishment.

* * *

On this particular morning there came into his ward a noted professor of the medical school of Cornell University. Trailing him were a number of medical students, members of the professor's class. Paying no more attention to Milans than he would to any other specimen to be charted and analyzed for the enlightenment of his embryo physicians, the professor instructed his students to encircle the cot. Milans, half submerged in his despair, felt no antipathy at this uninvited invasion of his privacy.

When the students had taken their places about the cot, gazing curiously at the wreck of a man who lay there, the professor began his lecture on "The Effects of Alcohol on the Human System." He was careful to explain that as men of science they were not to interest themselves in the moral or political phases of the liquor question. Theirs was to be simply the coldly scientific interest of the expert analyst.

The professor dealt carefully with the pathology of inebriety, the psychic effect on the drunkard himself and the certain physical results of excessive drinking. He then explained the various methods used by those who advertise to "cure" the drunkard of his habit, outlining the course of treatment to be used.

"But," said the professor, "the effectiveness of any of these treatments is absolutely dependent upon two things. First, the enlisting of the patient's determined will-power to co-operate with the efforts made on his behalf. If we have that, we can in time clean the alcohol out of his system. But unless the patient is able to summon sufficient will-power to aid us in the long fight of downing the appetite, the 'cure' will avail nothing.

"Secondly, we must catch the patient before he has gone too far. If a man reaches the stage where his appetite is the biggest thing in his life, where his powers of resistance are broken down, where his body subsists almost entirely on alcohol, he is then positively incurable. It is entirely possible for a man to get beyond the point where medical science can do him any permanent good.

"For example, look at this man!"

The students again directed their gaze at the pitiful and helpless Milans, who started a little at the professor's words.

"We have discovered in this man all the marked indications of the incurable inebriate. Note the dancing eyes, a sure sign of approaching insanity brought on by the habit. Note the trembling of his hands and other members of his body. Alcohol has so eaten into his nerve centers that he cannot control himself physically, to say nothing of mentally and morally."

Unutterably miserable, Milans listened to the professor's dissertation as he called attention to his bloated and blood-shot face and explained the way alcohol worked to bring about such conditions; to the indications which were found in his throat and fingers. Milans knew that the diagnosis was accurate as it concerned his wretched body. But he knew also that the lecturer had not told half the story as it applied to his wretched heart and soul.

Then came the pronouncement of the death sentence.

"This man," said the professor slowly, as though to give emphasis to his words, "*can never be cured!* You are looking at an example of alcoholism at its worst. He must die as he has lived, a drunkard. Nothing can save him. Before long he will be found dead in one of the human rat-holes that abound in the slums where he will hide away as soon as he is able to leave the hospital, providing he does not finish here in delirium tremens.

"You are looking, gentlemen, at *a hopeless incurable.* There is nothing in medicine that can help him to overcome his insatiable craving for whiskey!"

The lecture finished, the professor and his students left the ward.

* * *

After another week had passed, in which other specialists had come to examine him as a laboratory example of the incurable, Milans was discharged from the hospital to make room for other patients. The hospital, in cleaning the alcohol from his system and washing his body, had done all in its power.

But the appetite remained.

As Milans turned away from Bellevue, sick in body and heart, the death sentence of the Cornell professor sang in his ears with mocking fatality. "Nothing can save . . . must die a drunkard . . . alcoholism at its worst . . . a *hopeless incurable!*"

* * *

Incurable! There is no word in our language so fraught with hopelessness. No way out. No relief in sight. Always this whiskey-scored body and soul. Always this misery of conscience. Incurable! Nothing to look forward to. Nothing to anticipate in this world or any other.

Rob a man of his horizon, and you have taken his all.

After all is said, we know that the horizon ahead is the thing that keeps a man going. The religionist anticipates Heaven. The business man hopes for success. The prisoner looks forward to liberty. The pleasure-seeker whets his appetite by an imagined new thrill tomorrow. To one and all life presents a horizon, unattainable perhaps as the mythical pot of gold, but nevertheless inspiring on and on to further effort. Obliterate a man's horizon, and you have taken his life.

And as Milans turned his weary steps toward the Bowery, he was conscious of a lost horizon. For him life held no perspective.

He was incurable!

XVII

"BOOZERS' CONVENTION"

CONCURRENT almost to the day with the dismissal of Henry Milans from Bellevue Hospital as an incurable dipsomaniac, The Salvation Army launched one of the most ambitious and daring schemes ever conceived for the regeneration of drunkards. This effort was labelled and advertised as a "Boozers' Convention."

Briefly stated, a Boozers' Convention consisted of a whole regiment of Salvationists going out at one time into the highways and byways of New York City and literally compelling all of the bums, drunkards, ne'er-do-wells and broken pieces of nondescript humanity who could be found to submit to being directed, led or carried to The Salvation Army Memorial Hall on West Fourteenth Street for the purpose of being invited, coaxed or jarred out of their hopelessness and worthlessness into conversion and good citizenship.

Though at first only an experiment, the Boozers' Convention proved such a tremendous success that it was repeated for several succeeding years.

* * *

It is doubtful whether any single gesture of reform ever received so wide publicity. Newspaper editors, jaded by routine news that bore a tiresome sameness, eagerly seized upon the "Drive on Boozers" as good copy and devoted columns to announcing the effort. After one of the annual Boozers' Conventions, a newspaper clipping service announced that over thirty-six yards of single column space had been given the event by New York papers alone. These stories were picked up and reprinted by newspapers the world over. Religious journals took up the matter in their editorial columns and speculated upon the possibility of any permanent good coming from "so wild-fire a scheme."

When long accounts of the first Boozers' Convention began to appear in London papers through the Associated Press they caused no little agitation at The Salvation Army's International Headquarters. General William Booth, Founder and then leader of the organization, cabled to Commander Evangeline Booth for fuller details of New York's underworld crusade that was causing more comment than any effort made by The Army since his own "Darkest England Scheme'" broke upon the world. Later, the old General expressed himself as immensely pleased with this wholesale carrying out of his much-quoted command to his followers, "Go for souls, and go for the worst!"

* * *

The originator and impresario of the Boozers' Convention idea was a man who is one of the most widely known Salvation Army leaders in America—Commissioner William McIntyre, at this moment in command of the organization's work in the Central States. Possessed of an unusually vigorous and original personality, McIntyre has promoted any number of extraordinary campaigns for human uplift and social reform in the United States. At the time of his Boozers' Days he bore the rank of Colonel and was in command of what was known as the Central Province of The Salvation Army, with headquarters in New York City.

The Boozers' Convention idea came to Colonel McIntyre as the result of a deep conviction on his part that something unusual and desperate should be done for the thousands of drunks and bums who swarmed the underworld of the city. Ably assisting him in the working out of the detail of the effort was Major (now Lieutenant-Colonel) A. W. Baillie, his second in command. Together they created and developed for the salvaging of drunks, a huge and efficient machine, the operations of which we will now describe.

* * *

The Boozers' Convention was usually held on Thanksgiving Day of each year. For weeks previous to this, however, it was given wide and sensational announcement—especially in those sections from whence the workers hoped to get material for the feeding of the Boozer machine. Bold placards, worded and displayed to catch attention, screamed out their ballyhoo from almost every telephone post and billboard of the underworld. To the announcement of time and place, a glaring catch-line was added which, when all else failed, succeeded in bringing customers by the score. It read, "FREE EATS ALL DAY!"

By the time Thanksgiving Day arrived, the city had been divided into four districts. A fleet of Fifth Avenue coaches were commandeered for the occasion and each of these was manned, besides the driver, by three of the most stalwart Salvationists to be found in New York. The coaches started out at four-thirty in the morning and for many hours cruised such places as the Bowery, the public parks, Hell's Kitchen, municipal lodging houses and sections bordering on East Thirty-third and East Thirty-fourth streets, scooping up any and all of the human driftwood within reach and delivering it into the harbour for derelicts at Memorial Hall.

The Salvationists made their way into all manner of dens and flop-houses to issue forth with their prey. In this work they received little opposition from the operators of the "joints" as those worthies were only too delighted to have their non-paying clientèle taken off their hands.

* * *

A special event of each Boozers' Convention was the spectacular parade which took place in the afternoon. For this moving street pageant, the entire New York forces of The Army were brought into play, making a march that usually stretched into three-quarters of a mile in length. In the parade would be four or five brass bands, which alternated to make the martial music continuous.

Near the front of the procession was a water-wagon, borrowed from the city's street cleaning department, drawn by four horses. On the wagon, chained to every available place on the vehicle, were bona-fide bums of all descriptions. Uniformed Salvationists marched on either side, ostensibly for the purpose of keeping the bums "on the wagon." Because of this feature the procession was referred to in many newspaper accounts as "The Water-Wagon Parade."

In the parade were also floats that depicted in tableau form the miseries of a drunkard's life, prison scenes and other results of drink.

Most striking of all, perhaps, was the "Walking Whiskey Bottle," ten feet high, made of papier-maché, and having on its side a label which proclaimed its contents to be genuine "Bourbon XX," or some brand equally familiar. To this huge bottle was chained a figure representing an old drunk—ragged, bloated, and reeling—behind whom there walked with bowed head and shawled shoulders a woman whose poverty of dress, thinness of figure, and ragged children trailing behind her, eloquently represented the woes which befall a drunkard's wife. This feature caused much comment, and was reproduced in cartoons in many newspapers.

Another feature of the parade was a walking stack of cards, escorting between them a man in convict garb.

The parade would form in front of The Salvation Army Memorial Hall between Sixth and Seventh avenues and would reach well past Union Square. The line of march would generally proceed up Eighth Avenue to 23rd Street and return via Fifth Avenue or Broadway. Arrived back at the hall the paraders would countermarch to form circles, after which the procession would enter the auditorium, carrying with it, like a swirling vortex, a large number of boozers.

* * *

A widely-advertised feature which was used in one of the Annual Conventions was "The Trial of John Barleycorn." So popular a defendant, marching in the parade with the Judge, the Jury and the Witnesses, brought crowds of interested spectators to Memorial Hall to see what disposition would be made of their friend. Court convened at three o'clock in the afternoon, by which time even standing room was at a premium.

The large platform was arranged to represent the seting of a court room. A bona-fide judge, in the person of a magistrate of the First Police Court of Jersey City, presided. A couple of prominent attorneys offered their services to the plaintiff and defendant respectively. Witnesses for the prosecution were subpoenaed from the ranks of specialists on inebria and from leading charitable institutions. The convincing testimonies of these witnesses made things look black for poor John. Major Winchell —in charge of The Salvation Army Men's Hotel on the Bowery, and, incidentally, the author of this particular drama—also offered damaging evidence.

The Defence made a strenuous effort to obtain witnesses, subpoenaing several very effective parties such as saloon-keepers, anti-temperance leaders and others of that ilk. But these witnesses for the Defence failed to show up, whereupon the broad-minded Judge opened the witness box for any and all who might care to come to the aid of their friend John. Two or three of the audience accepted the invitation, following which the case was summed up, and the Judge gave his charge to the Jury, who retired to discuss the case.

In a few minutes the Jury returned, bringing a verdict of "Guilty," with no recommendation of mercy. The Judge then solemnly pronounced the sentence: John Barleycorn should be executed that same evening between the hours of seven and nine. And at the appointed time the condemned, in the shape of a barrel, appeared on the platform, accompanied by the executioner. Then, while the audience held its breath, John Barleycorn was brutally smashed to bits by the zealous man with the axe.

XVIII

DERELICTS' HARBOUR

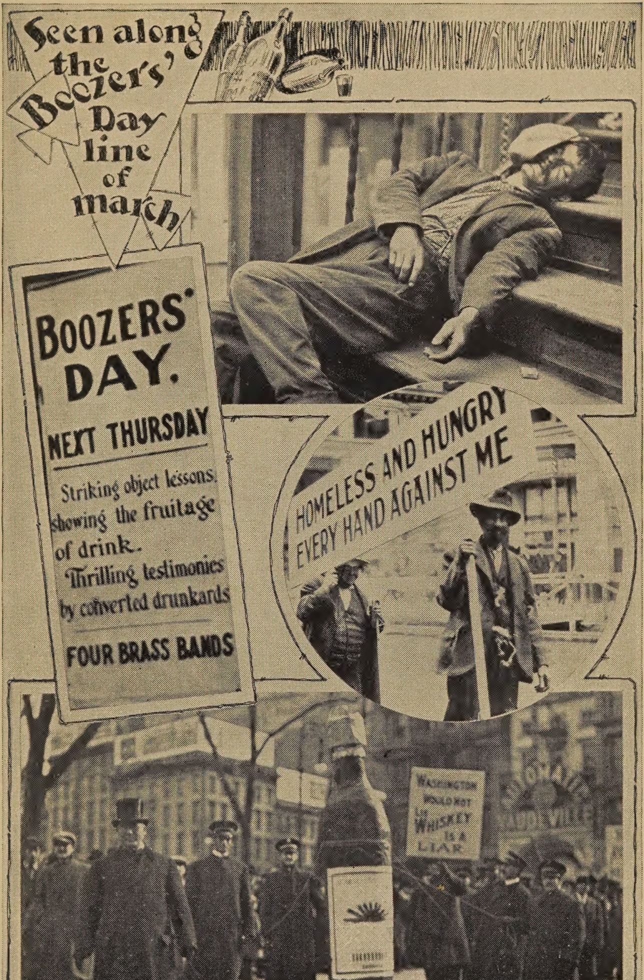
THE Salvation Army's Memorial Hall on Boozers' Day presented a spectacle not calculated to delight the senses of the aesthetic.

Picture twelve hundred inebriates, gathered from the dirtiest hell-holes of the city. There are representatives of every species of the genus drunk. Some are ragged and grimy and barefoot and unshaven; matted hair and beard and clothing form a home for all manner of vermin. Others are clothed in the remnants of quality cloth, and their sensitive faces and bleary eyes betray at once their refinement and their weakness. Some are aged, reeling on decrepit limbs none too steady even without the added weight of the booze they have to carry. Others are young, rescued from the gutter in perhaps their first trip to the Bowery—mothers' sons for whom anxious hearts are beating. Dotting the crowd are seen a few women, revolting in their womanhood's collapse.

Each drunk has brought with him his individual smell to be compacted into a putrid odour that hangs over the audience like a thick fog.

* * *

There they sit. A vast crowd of tattered, stupefied humanity. Humanity? Some might even deny them the right to that classification, relegating them to the class of beasts. But whatever they are, there they sit in their vile rags, huddled together with downcast eyes, a



Seen along the Boozers' Day line of march

BOOZERS' DAY.

NEXT THURSDAY

Striking object lessons showing the fruitage of drink.

Thrilling testimonies by converted drunkards

FOUR BRASS BANDS

HOMELESS AND HUNGRY
EVERY HAND AGAINST ME
WASHINGTON
WHISKEY
IS A
LIAR

composite picture of human degradation coming close to warmth and brightness and music. We have no idea what is thought, but if it could be read, doubtless there would be seen chiselled into the remnants of their minds the words, "WITHOUT GOD, WITHOUT HOPE."

Atmosphere malodorous! Atmosphere hopeless! Atmosphere of death!

And from this material and in this place The Army, aided by what they call "the power and love of God," hopes to manufacture saints!

* * *

Let us watch the process. There are a number of visitors in the gallery of the auditorium—civic leaders, heads of reform movements, magistrates, newspaper men . . . all interested in viewing The Army's attempt to accomplish what many of them believe to be the impossible with these incorrigibles. We will join them.

Despite the putrid atmosphere in the body of the large auditorium, there is radiating from the platform a brightness, a cheeriness, a goodness, a sweetness, a harmony that seems strangely out of place. Limitless faith challenging bottomless despair; lightning flashes of belief piercing the murky blackness of gloomiest infidelity.

A brass band is kept on the platform all day to provide music—snappy marches and memory-stirring hymns. These band selections are interspersed with speeches and solos. The audience frequently interrupts to request the singing or playing of a favourite hymn, usually such as "Where is My Wandering Boy Tonight?," "Nearer My God to Thee," or "Rock of Ages." These requests are complied with when possible, and the entire crowd joins in. Many brush away tears with dirty sleeves.

Things are not allowed to lag. The meetings are continuous, but continuously interesting. No one is allowed to speak who cannot put over his message in a virile way—and do it quickly. This audience does not want beautiful verbiage, studied gestures, careful peroration, or copy-book phrases.

Colonel McIntyre, piloting the meeting, keeps things moving. Between items of music and singing, he delivers sermonettes couched in vigour and brevity. We can see that his philosophy of conversion, expressed in straight-from-the-shoulder fashion, and tempered with humour, is striking the bums with an interest that brings them up a little straighter in their seats.

But the Colonel does not do all the speaking. He knows his audience and realizes that there is no argument so convincing as an example. He has, therefore, provided for a wealth of personal testimony. On the platform are a number of "ex-boozers" who, when they rise to tell their former pals the stories of their conversion, are received with cheers. These men are the Colonel's pride, his aces of conversion, his prodigies of God's Grace. One is struck by their fine appearance. Well-dressed, prosperous-looking men. Some speak in refined eloquence, others express themselves in the slang of the Bowery, but they all speak with conviction and force.

One converted boozer rises to testify, "I drank like a fish. I was a roaring, snorting booze-fighter. But now if the Atlantic Ocean were all whiskey and I got dumped overboard and had to spend the rest of my life swimming around in it, I wouldn't open my gills to take in even a single drop."

Another says, "Before The Army picked me up last Boozers' Day, I was so lousy that if everything on me could vote I could have been elected President of these United States by a large majority!"

When the call for penitents is given, scores make their way to the altar in front. By this time most of them are sufficiently sobered to know what they are doing; the strong coffee and solid food have accomplished their purpose. Each call yields no less than two hundred and fifty professing penitents, and often as many as four hundred.

Of course, there are many who get nowhere. But others rise to their feet to be brought to the platform, where they express themselves as having been inducted into a new life.

After the meeting, these converts are carefully followed up. If they have no home they are conveyed to the various Men's Hotels and Industrial Homes operated by The Army in and near New York City. Here they are fed for a few days until they can get on their feet, when jobs are found for them. Women converts are sent to The Salvation Army Women's Hotel on the Bowery for care and treatment. All are carefully watched over and nourished in their new experience.

* * *

Have these converts stood? Is there any lasting effect today, two decades later, from these Boozers' Conventions?

While eternity alone can reveal the actual results of those unique efforts, there are a number of known converts still standing who are representative of at least an equal number who have either died or been lost sight of.

These converts are scattered all over the world. Even now word occasionally comes in from some far away land from someone who has had a contact with one of the ex-boozers. They are met with in all parts of America. One was recently heard from in New Zealand, another from South America and still another came to light in far-off Russia.

Many of the converts have no actual connection with The Army, desirous perhaps of cutting themselves off from anything that would remind them of their past lives, or afraid lest their present proud positions in society should be endangered by the fact of their former degradation leaking out.

* * *

Another outgrowth of the Boozers' Conventions, which received wide newspaper publicity was the "Ex-Boozers' Banquet," held February 12, 1914, at which were gathered three hundred reformed drunkards, many of whom by that time were holding prominent and responsible positions in New York City. The dinner was prepared by a noted caterer, and was paid for by one of the ex-boozers who had by this time attained to wealth and prominence.

Beside each plate was a miniature flask filled with water that had been colored by burnt sugar to resemble liquor. On one side of the bottle was pasted a label which contained this unique message, purporting to be from the bottle itself, and composed especially for the occasion by Herbert Corey, noted newspaper columnist and wit:

"Well, old pal, are you glad to see me? You ought to be, you know. You're a man and I'm a bottle, but we're mightily like each other. When we're full of booze we're useless. There isn't room in us for anything worth while. After we've been full awhile we get pretty dusty. Folks don't even try to read the original label. Then we go on the shelf. We like it there at first; no one bothers us. Our warmest hope is that we may be forgotten—and never be empty. But by and by no one will fill us with liquor. Then we're thrown on the dump. It takes imagination to see that either of us is worth saving. But someone with imagination comes along, and somehow we're clean again. Some of the old scratches still show. We aren't pretty any more. The tin foil and gold enamel of youth have gone. But, Mister Man, we're on the job!

(Signed) THE BOTTLE."

On the other side of the flask was a label which brought out some interesting statistics concerning one hundred and seventy-six of the men present who had filled in blanks from which was tabulated the following information:

These 176 ex-boozers had lived a total of 3,238 years as drunkards.

They had spent approximately $1,291,500 for intoxicating liquor.

Their estimated unearned wages, through incapacity due to drink, were $645,750.

This represented a total loss to the nation in earning power of approximately $2,000,000.

Following a number of addresses, one of which was by Mrs. McIntyre, wife of the banquet's chairman, on "An Ex-Drunkard's Duty to His Home," the Colonel proposed that the attendants should organize themselves into a fraternal organization. This suggestion was heartily received and the name "United Order of Ex-Boozers" was adopted. A constitution was drawn up which read in part as follows:

"Object—By mutual effort to promote the moral, material and spiritual welfare of the members; to seek out in every community those who are known to be addicted to the use of alcoholic liquor and try to win them back.

"Obligations for Membership—No man can become a member of the organization unless he willingly obligates himself to aid in the reclamation of men who are still drunkards, trying to restore any brother who should fall by the wayside. Each member obligates himself to aid the drunkards in the neighbourhood in which he lives."

* * *

The "United Order of Ex-Boozers" was just one other visible result of a powerful and unique method of reclaiming the Bowery's worst.

XIX

INTRODUCTION TO HOPE

THANKSGIVING Day, 1910, dawned clear and cold. Milans awoke from an uncomfortable night's intermittent sleep under a warehouse loading platform. He was almost frozen. A biting wind swept riotously through the streets. Getting to his feet, he pulled his ragged coat closer about his body and paced up and down the platform a few times to warm himself. With the activity of body, his mind also began to work, throwing some painful realizations into sharp relief. Chief of these was that he was an "incurable." The doctors had so pronounced such, confirming what he had for months believed.

Ceasing his pacing he sat down miserably on an empty box on the platform, shielding himself as best he could from the raw wind.

Incurable! The word pounded in his mind like a severe headache, awakening echoes of despair. The more he mused upon his hopeless condition, the more he became convinced that in the mathematics of morals, he was the lowest integer possible. Even now his body cried out for alcohol. The appetite was maddening. Certainly no other person could be so bereft of hope as he was. He bowed his head in his hands, a despairing, dejected figure.

Hearing a step, he looked up, expecting to see the watchman approaching to order him off. But he looked instead into the eyes of a sweet-faced girl.

She was clothed in the uniform of The Salvation Army; her face was framed in a blue poke bonnet. She looked down at him for a moment, and Milans felt the very air warm with her pity. When she spoke it was to ask him if he was not tired of his life of degradation and sin. Her solicitude partially melted his present bitterness, and he told her the story of his experience in Bellevue Hospital, where the sentence of death had been passed upon him.

"The doctors and specialists have declared that I am incurable," he said in a hollow tone.

She reflected on this a moment and then impatiently said, "Of course they can't cure you there! Yours is more than a physical trouble; it is the sort of heart disease that they can't touch. But listen, Jesus can cure you and make you a good man again if you will let Him."

Then she told him of a big special meeting that had been planned for that day expressly for just such unfortunates as he was. It was called a Boozers' Convention. Would he promise to come? Milans yielded to the tender entreaty, and told her that he would be there.

* * *

He kept his promise and reached Memorial Hall in the afternoon. He found the entire lower floor of the immense auditorium reserved for and filled by men like himself. He crowded into a seat at the back of the hall. There was wafted to him an atmosphere made up of about ten per cent God's pure air and ninety per cent effluvia from unwashed bodies. Some one on the platform was giving out a song, the band played and the hall fairly rocked with the unmusical singing of those hundreds of drunks.

After the song, a man in uniform arose and in a few sentences addressed the audience. A man next to Milans told him the speaker was Colonel McIntyre. Milans was sufficiently stirred out of his stupor to be impressed by the Colonel. He appealed to Milans as being a virtuoso of that brand of plain English that any man could readily comprehend.

But the Colonel's enthusiastic insistence that there was a Power that could not only forgive sin but that would *take away the very appetite* for liquor, struck Milans as claiming a trifle too much for religion. The present craving of every fibre of his being for alcohol disputed the truth of the Colonel's words. But, somehow, these dogmatic assertions of God's ability to do the impossible seemed strangely to agree with the teachings and faith of Mother Milans.

So, although his mind stubbornly told his heart that he was beyond even the help of Almighty God, his heart seemed to whisper back that the Colonel's sermon had left there a small deposit of hope that perhaps there was, after all, something in Mother's religion to help a man when he had got to the place where he could not help himself.

* * *

After a while it was announced that food would be served in a lower hall. In sections the bums filed downstairs, Milans with them. Every man received a generous portion of beef stew, strong coffee and hot rolls, after which he was directed back to the meeting.

This was the first food that Milans had ever received from The Salvation Army. Many times on the Bowery his associates had spoken of their visits to The Army's soup kitchens and lodging houses, but somehow he had got the wrong impression of what was needed to get assistance from the Salvationists. He had an idea that when one asked for a bed for the night or a meal he was first expected to "get religion," and despite his degradation, Milans had never been able to bring himself to the place where he could adopt the rôle of a convert in order to get a meal or bed.

He had too long regarded religion as a sacred thing to be able to lift his voice in artificial hosannas, in spite of the pangs of hunger that often assailed him. So, with the mistaken notion that The Army required that salvation should come before soup, he had hitherto kept away from their meetings. Now he saw that all shared alike in the food distribution.

The meeting proceeded, and when the invitation to test the power of God on broken lives was given, Milans saw about three hundred respond. He wondered if they would find anything at the altar that could change them. They might, he told himself, but it was not for him. Of all that motley assembly he was sure that he was the worst. No, he would listen to the inward urge that told him to give it a trial. God knows, he had faced enough disappointments without adding another at a religious altar.

* * *

When the meeting was over, he drifted out to the nearest park, where he seated himself on a bench to think it all over. Could it be possible that the Salvation Army man was right? That no matter how far a man had gone, there was still hope?

"No, no," he cried within himself. "That would be a miracle, and miracles are not being performed on Bowery bums these days. If God ever wrought such work, He is not doing it now. The day of miracles is past. It's too late; I'm done for."

There in the park he wept bitterly. Some would call it self-pity. But perhaps, if analyzed, his tears, wept in bitter realization of his hopelessness, would be found not so different from that other sorrow by which men enter into repentance and salvation. For who can sound the depths of human emotion and pronounce definitely its real source and issue?

* * *

The next evening Milans wandered back to Memorial Hall. He supposed those mammoth meetings were nightly affairs, and although he could not hope to gain any spiritual help from them, it was warm there and he enjoyed the singing.

Instead of a big meeting, however, he was surprised to find only a smaller one going on in the lower hall. Standing in the doorway he saw that in this hall there was no dark corner into which he might creep to hide his filth. He hesitated to go near the little audience, made up of a different class from that of the night before, lest his presence should offend. For only a moment he stood at the entrance to the hall, fumbling at the ragged rim of his dilapidated hat. Then he turned as if to go back into the street.

But a voice halted him.

"Oh, brother, don't go away. Come right in and enjoy the meeting." And the owner of the voice, a young woman officer, held open the door for him.

He entered and dropped into a seat near the door. Here again the atmosphere was cheery and the singing inspired him. The unaffected friendliness and sincerity of the little group impressed him. The Captain—a young woman named Stella Cameron, he afterwards learned—preached a short sermon, which Milans was sure had been prepared expressly for him. It was on "Hope."

When the address was concluded, a short prayer-meeting was begun. One by one they lifted their vocal petitions, and Milans felt that they were not only praying in a general way *for* him, but praying directly *at* him.

"Just as I Am" and other invitation songs were sung while the audience either knelt or sat with bowed heads.

Then in the midst of the singing a young woman, Envoy Katie Roberts, left the platform and sat down by the side of Milans. In the presence of such cleanliness, he respectfully moved as if to get farther away. But she sensed his thought and spoke to him kindly:

"Never mind moving. I'm not afraid of your condition. We know how to get rid of those things. (She referred to the lice and dirt with which she took him to be covered.) But I want you to come with me to the penitent form and let Jesus cure you of those terrible habits that have spoiled your life."

Milans demurred, saying that nothing could be done for him. She persisted, asking many questions, and soon drew from him the story of Mother Milans and the Unusual Woman, of the latter's departure from his life, and his friends forsaking him when he needed them the most. Hearing this side of his story, Envoy Roberts abandoned her pleadings and proceeded to shame him for his misdeeds.

"Do you blame them for not having anything to do with you?" she asked. And after having properly "laced him down," as he has since described her lecture to him, she again invited him to "go forward."

But he did not go to the altar that night.

* * *

The irresistible appeal of the friendly little hall, however, drew him there evening after evening.

On his second visit, not desiring a repetition of the uncomfortable experience of the first night's prayer-meeting, he arose and hurriedly left the hall as soon as it seemed that another call to the altar was about to be given.

He had not gone far, however, when he heard the patter of quick footsteps behind him. He turned to confront another girl officer whom he had seen at the hall, a Captain Lena Jackson, assistant to Captain Cameron. She laid her hand restrainingly on his arm.

"Don't go away without saying 'good-night'," she said. "Do you know that we have been praying for you—Captain Cameron and I? Last night at the quarters we couldn't sleep, so we got out of bed, and prayed for you. We don't know who you are, so we just prayed for 'that man who needs God!' God is going to do something for you. Please come back tomorrow night. Will you? We are your friends. You won't be as lonesome among us as you will be in that dark old park. Good-night, and God bless you!"

Milans stared after the departing figure of the young woman. Praying for him? His friends? They wanted him—a dirty, depraved bum? They were sincere! Of that he was sure, for, he asked himself, what could possibly motivate such interest other than of the tenderest sincerity?

The Captain had touched his arm, but she had touched more . . . she had touched his heart with the consciousness that somebody cared.

And with that touch the work of conversion was already half effected.

XX

MIRACLE!

FOR a week of nights Milans attended The Army's meetings. During this time he manged to withstand the pleadings and prayers of the girl officers and the surging power of a thoroughly awakened conscience that was threatening to sweep him toward the altar.

It was not that he did not desire to be converted. Indeed, he wanted it more than anything in the world, he craved release from the chains of habit like a man entombed craves sunshine and liberty. But he had to be brought to the condition of mind in which he could believe in the possibility of his being saved.

The power of the unbelief that he had to overcome must not be underestimated.

Let it be remembered that his faith in the possibility of his ever again being sober had long since been swamped by his habit. The mire of the years of indulgence had completely covered his will-power, defeating again and again all his efforts to rise from the sinking sands. Years had passed since he had been able to remain sober for even a few days at a time, and during those times he had been beset continuously by his appetite.

From the time when, as a mere boy, he had taken his first drink until now, thirty-five years later, his habit had been erecting about him a wall of hopelessness. For the satisfying of his appetite he had abandoned his profes sion, prostituted his genius, broken his wife's heart, sunk to the uttermost depths of depravity. What few times the saving factor of hope had been dredged up through the bog of his sin, it was a frail, weak thing which invariably had succumbed to the first tremor of opposition.

And now, on top of all his failure and all his own hopelessness, the best brains of medical science had declared him incurable.

Every visible human agency had failed to reform him —had frankly admitted its impotence. Was it not asking a great deal to expect him now to trust in the power of an agency that was invisible? The opposing forces of his past were strong indeed. Hell had done its worst. But now heaven came forth to challenge hell. In numbers and appearance heaven seemed to be weak. But its forces were indomitable in faith.

Fearlessly facing those thirty-five years of habit, daring to hurl its dogmatic declaration in the teeth of the medical profession's death sentence, was a little group of Salvationists, most of whom experimentally had known comparatively little of sin's terrific grip, but who declared that God could not only make him sober but would so re-create him that he should never again *desire* to be anything else.

What holy bravado! Did they know whereof they spoke?

For a week of nights he pondered.

* * *

Then on a Thursday night, just one week after the Boozers' Meeting where he had first been touched, and convicted by the Holy Spirit, Milans surrendered.

Amid the fervent "Hallelujahs" of every Christian in the hall, he stumbled forward to the penitent-form, and there poured out his soul to God in an agony of desire—

not for whiskey this time, but for deliverance from its power.

No more earnest behest ever ascended to the Throne of God from the breast of a kneeling penitent than that prayer by Milans for release from his habit. He had shaken off the hold-back straps of unbelief. He had made the plunge. Now, he told himself, he must get what he came there for. He must! He determined not to leave that altar till the chains of appetite were snapped and God should come in and save him.

Not immediately, however, did conversion come. But he continued to pray; the Salvationists sang softly an encouraging refrain or two, others prayed. Then, when it seemed that his entire strength had been sapped by supplication, there stole gently across his troubled spirit —quietly, softly, like the feet of dawning day—the consciousness of a great peace. He seemed to feel close beside him a comforting Presence, and he thought he heard with an inner ear a Voice which said, *"Come. We will start life all over again without the habits that have spoiled it. Trust Me, I will keep thee."*

'Twas the Master, and down into the depths of hell there groped a hand—a nail-pierced one—which found the man it sought and lifted him out.

The miracle was performed.

* * *

He arose from his knees. He says that he was not ecstasied by an overpowering emotion. No instantaneous wave of exaltation swept over him. Comfort, yes; but no rushing, overwhelming desire to leap and shout. No seventh heaven descended to engulf him in a cloud of glory.

Ecstasy is not always a good thing; it sometimes has a tendency to sweep one's feet off the ground. Too often it begets the fanatic, the wild-eyed one, the impractical visionary. When religion goes to the head instead of the heart the effects are always disastrous. Though our hearts may soar, the place for our feet is on the ground.

Asked to describe his feeling at the time of his conversion, Milans replies that he remembers none . . . he was simply conscious of being deliciously clean and new. It was as though some Unseen Hand had appeared to dismantle him of all the loathsome and burdensome past. No words can improve on the Scriptural description: "Old things had passed away."

As the Salvationists gathered around to rejoice with him and to greet him as a comrade, he was as timid and shrinking as a little boy in the possession of something infinitely delightful but mysteriously incomprehensible. He was awed and hushed as a long-time prisoner just released from horrifying bondage.

* * *

When he left the hall that night it was to go back to the bench in Union Square park.

True, had he only hinted that he had no place to sleep, and had the young officers the slightest suspicion that he had not eaten for many hours, they would have forced him to accept temporary aid. He knew this, and his sensitiveness on the point caused him to hurry away just a little more quickly lest his somewhat haggard looks should cause them to forget their joy in his spiritual conversion long enough to inquire as to his physical circumstances.

Always that pride. He would not let it be said of him that he had "gone forward" for a bed or meal. Nobody should ever be able to point him out as one who had preyed upon his spiritual benefactors even to the extent of a meal. No! He would earn his own way, and in his new strength. God would help him. Of that he felt sure.

This sensitiveness, which some might call an idiosyncrasy, developed into a firm principle with Milans. He prides himself—probably justly—in the fact that he has never accepted a cent or its equivalent from The Salvation Army, either as charity or pay. His rule against taking payment for any service performed by him is iron-clad. He insists that all his life he must be a contributor. That he has been . . . and a generous one.

* * *

That night, as he entered Union Square, he seemed to be treading on foreign territory, so different did things look. Of course it was the same old world, the same old park, the same hard bench. But to him who was "a new creature" all things appeared new. And as he walked up to a bench, no king ever approached tapestried chamber with more sprightly step . . . no quilted couch ever felt softer to royal touch than the slats of that park bench.

For, you see, Milans was changed.

But his changed outlook on life was not an impractical one. He knew when he turned away from the sacred precincts and blessed atmosphere of that altar with its safety and kindliness, and those hovering souls so anxious to help, that he was going out to face a world of temptation and opposition. As a newspaper man, he knew too much of life to imagine for a moment that the Salvationists' tender joy at his conversion would be paralleled in everybody he met.

But the consciousness of an Almighty Presence, imminent and interested, gave his spirit great calm. There, in the solitudes of the great city, on a park bench, the

Presence seemed to whisper to him lovingly, *"Fear not, I will help thee: I will sustain thee, for I have redeemed thee. Thou art mine!"*

And strength came to him.

* * *

When morning broke Milans was awakened as usual by the park policeman whose habit it was to make sure that all his lodgers in the park were aroused before going off his beat. Milans responded to the night-stick's "fanning" of his feet with an alacrity never before seen in him by the policeman. He even smiled a "Thank you!" at his uniformed landlord, who watched him hasten away, musing on the fact that there are some things which even a cop can't understand.

Determination had taken a firm grip on him and when he started to walk downtown it was with the steadfast purpose of finding work of some kind.

Down on Center Street was a bartender who had known Milans in his days of success. Latterly, for old time's sake, it had been his habit to provide Milans with the first two drinks of the day as an "eye-opener." Milans thought of his friend as he walked. For only a moment he wondered if he had not better first get those two drinks; they would warm his shivering flesh and quieten his quaking nerves. But by the next moment he had spurned the thought as something hateful, and had deliberately turned his steps in another direction.

Surely, he thought, a miracle must have been performed when he, Henry F. Milans, could walk away from free liquor! He marvelled at the absence of craving; at the ease with which he could spurn the suggestion. His inner man made no response to the thought of drink. It dawned upon him then that he was *free!*

There is only one Power as great as the Power which Milans met at the Army altar. That is the Power that *kept* him. Heaven must have rejoiced at that contrite spirit at the penitent-form—we are told that it does at such a sight. But an even greater jubilee must have taken place in the Celestial Land when Milans turned away from temptation. For in that turning the angels must have seen the sign of his victory.

And God, witnessing the sight, then and there clinched the bargain, and bestowed upon Milans the fullness of his deliverance.

Listen to his testimony, given nineteen years later; *"From that moment to the present I never have been tempted to take a drink of anything with alcohol in it."*

The appetite was gone! Plumb the recesses of his inner man as he would, never again could he locate a trace of desire for the thing that had spoiled his years.

Listen once more: "If I were again to become a drunkard *I should have to acquire anew the appetite for liquor.* I should have to learn all over again to love the drink that was for thirty-five years the greatest love of my life."

What has unbelief to say in answer to that?

* * *

Here is a *living* miracle. His story is known to thousands today. His life is an open book to any who may care to enquire into his experience.

Let him come forward again and speak. Amazed at the change in himself—and his amazement grows with the years—he is standing before a great audience in the State of New Jersey. He has related his experience, and in an outburst of sincere eloquence he is delivering himself of his fervour:

"Explain it if you can, you who do not profess any belief in the miracle-working power of the Saviour. Explain if you can, you wise men of Bellevue, you professors at Cornell, you to whom science has taught so much about these bodies of ours, and who dare to pronounce a man beyond hope because his very vitals demand the poison so insistently that he must die unless he gets it!

"This man who craved liquor more than he did food, or life, or love, or mother, or wife, or home; whose life had become utterly depraved through its use; who had been hurled from the pinnacle of success into the deepest depths of failure; who was willing to go through any degree of degradation or hell that he might only secure more liquor . . . this man, sirs, was now sober!

"And sober because he wanted to be sober.

"Explain it, if you can. You can't? I can. And in a word—Christ!"

XXI

"A NEW CREATURE"

ON the day following his conversion Milans tramped the streets for many hours in search of work, and received only rebuffs. Those for whom he offered to work at any price glanced at his drink-stained appearance and curtly said they had nothing to offer. Even foremen who knew of his ability as a printing expert refused him, not wanting to put him to work beside decent men.

As the day grew older he became desperate. He was ill from exposure, weakened from lack of food and sleep. From shop to shop he dragged on, to be met at every call by gruff refusals. But though his body lagged his spirit did not; it ran ahead to beckon him encouragingly to make one more try.

At last, in the afternoon, he applied at a little printing shop on the top floor of a Maiden Lane building, and was given work. The shop was run by a struggling Jew, who offered Milans fifty cents to work for him for the remainder of the day. Milans says he was so grateful he could have hugged him. At the end of the day the Jew gave him the promised half dollar, but in doing so he held out no hope of ever seeing Milans again.

"That's the last I'll see of you, I suppose. But you've earned the money. Good-bye to you!"

Milans took the fifty cents, the first bit of money not destined to be spent on whiskey he had carried for many a day. As he took the piece he felt a surge of pride at having honestly earned it by the labour of his hands, prouder than when at any other time he had received a pay envelope containing hundreds of dollars.

* * *

Now in the possession of comparative wealth, it would be natural to expect that he would immediately make for a saloon. But his thought lay elsewhere. He did not even pause to get something to eat. He headed for The Salvation Army hall. It was a long journey, not less than four miles, and he was hungry and his body was weary and the cold winds cut through his thin clothes. But his heart was on fire with a new ambition, a new love that warmed him through and through, a love that gave him new hope.

Arrived at the hall, the half-dollar clasped tightly in his hand, his first act was to go to the altar where he fell on his knees to thank God for the start he had made toward decency and manhood. As a practical expression of his gratitude and new financial independence, he did immediately what Christian tithers call "Honouring the Lord with their substance"—he deposited five cents of the fifty in the collection when the tambourine was passed.

After the meeting he went to the Mills Hotel on Bleecker Street, one of those philanthropic institutions founded by Ogden Mills, where a man might obtain bed and bath for twenty cents. Here he bathed himself, brushed his clothes and washed his shirt. Ten cents he spent on supper, and in the morning another dime went for breakfast. This left him with five cents for lunch.

When the Jew arrived to open his shop that morning, Milans was waiting for him. The Jew was thoroughly surprised, as he had not expected to see his inebriate-looking printer again, certainly not in a condition of washed face and combed hair. On the spot he promised Milans ten dollars a week if he would stay with him.

All that day Milans worked hard. He was steadier of hand than he had been the day before, and the Jew was obviously pleased with what he did. As he worked on, his eyes at times would fill with tears of gratitude at the thought that soon he would again be independent and clean and respected.

Every now and then he would turn his gaze out of the window and up to the clear expanse of sky, and, like a little child who fears to be left alone in the dark, would breathe almost inaudibly, "Jesus, are you still there watching me?" And the answer would come back plain and clear: *"Fear not, I am with thee."* And so he worked on through the day.

* * *

During those early days of his new life, Milans fought and won a battle with another enemy which had entrenched itself quite as strongly as had the liquor habit. Tobacco was the foe.

It is remarkable in stories of deliverance from the drink habit how often the tobacco question rises and falls with the liquor question. They seem to be closely related in the seat of the appetites. Hear the story of his deliverance:

Among other things that Milans purchased with the money he received on the Saturday was a generous supply of tobacco. Smoking was a habit to which he had been addicted for forty years, during which time he had formed an inseparable alliance with his pipe. It had been constantly with him, a dear, quieting, comforting companion. Cigarettes did not fascinate him. He was such a large man he imagined he looked ridiculous behind the little "coffin nails." But the pipe had established itself as a necessity.

During his Bowery years the problem of obtaining tobacco had stood side by side with the whiskey problem for solving. And just as he had somehow managed to obtain liquor, so was he also able to get tobacco. This he did either by begging it from passersby or gathering it from the sidewalks and gutters.

But when, on the next morning, which was Sunday, three days after his conversion, he had seated himself contentedly in Washington Square park, puffing his pipe, the warm heat-blackened bowl cuddled in the hollow of his hand, he suddenly had a feeling that something was not as it should be. During the past few days he had formed the habit of keeping in almost constant touch with God in prayer, but now as he tried to pray he felt that his prayers did not ascend. What was the barrier? he wondered. Then when a puff of wind blew the smoke from his pipe back in his face, he knew.

It was the pipe that had clouded his communion!

"That pipe must go with the other unclean things!" spoke up his inner man. "God does not want you to smoke in His presence. And as you are going to have to abide constantly in His presence to win this fight with yourself, you must banish the hindrance!"

But all day long he fought the idea. He argued, but to no satisfaction. To the plea that many good, Christian men smoked came the reply "That's none of your affair: *you* must not smoke!" For the first time in many years his pipe was not a comfort to him. It was a source of contention.

That evening, as he prepared himself for the meeting, the fight within him increased in intensity. His troubled soul demanded that a definite step of some kind be taken. Acting on sudden impulse, he dropped to his knees beside his cot and asked God just what He would have him do about it.

The answer came immediately, and with perfect clearness, "Give it up for My sake. You cannot afford to cling to a habit which would draw you away from perfect communion with Me."

That night, once for all, he finished the fight.

The battle's end took place in front of The Army hall on Fourteenth Street, and there, before he went in to take part in the worship of his new Master, he threw his pipe and all his tobacco into the gutter. Suddenly he was happy again, and as he boldly entered the hall, he felt he had won the approval of his Master. When he arose in the meeting that night to testify of the new victory, the hall echoed with jubilant "Hallelujahs."

And again God honoured his obedience . . . he has never since felt any desire for tobacco.

* * *

After this experience, Milans made a practice of yielding immediately to the promptings of his inner self. As a result, he developed a tender and sensitive conscience on all doubtful matters during the succeeding years of his Christian life. Recognizing this delicate "sixth sense," which some psychologists are pleased to refer to as a habitually sensitized sub-instinct, as the voice of God. Further, and for the purpose of getting on even closer terms with his Master he established a definite place and time for intercourse with God.

He says, "Early in my Christian life I learned to place a Divine valuation on the Voice within me. For a while I had considered it merely as my conscience, to be listened to, argued with, or disregarded as my 'better judgment' dictated. But after I became better acquainted with God and learned how to meet Him and talk with Him and listen to Him in the secret place that we had established for our daily intimate conference, I learned that what I had called my conscience and whose promptings I did not always respect, was in reality the Voice of God directing me in the path of His will. This new conception has had volumes of meaning to my life. Placing the Voice on the Divine plane meant that it is an oracle not to be disputed with. And listening attentively, alertly, lovingly, to learn His will for me has brought victory where without it there would certainly have been defeat."

* * *

In the meantime, his growth in the favour of his employer marched side by side with his growth in favour with God. As the days went by the little Jew appreciated more and more the fact that he was getting wonderful value for his money. One day he called Milans to him and announced that he was going to give him a raise of two dollars a week. Milans thanked him sincerely, for, though the wages were still trifling, he knew that the business was not bringing in much.

During the next few weeks Milans more than repaid the Jew for the kindness. Known as he was to the printing trade, he was able to put his employer on the track of several business houses with printing jobs to let. These the Jew canvassed, armed with a letter from Milans, and invariably returned with enough work to keep the little shop running at capacity speed.

Among the places successfully solicited by the Jew was the Department of Education of New York City, an old customer of the former firm of "Milans and Brieger."

But, though the Jew's visit here brought him a great number of smaller jobs, it eventually cost him the services of his master craftsman.

This came about in the following way:

Brieger, upon calling at the Department of Education to take one of the larger orders which his firm still handled, was told that the Board had recently received a letter from his former partner, Milans. This confirmed Brieger's suspicions that something had happened to effect a change in Milans. Only a few weeks before Mrs. Brieger and one of the girls in the office had been the recipients of a large box of candy from him; and where on earth, had asked the whole office force in a breath, could Milans get money enough to waste on candy instead of drink? They had just known something was wrong . . . or more correctly, right.

Now Brieger, armed with a clue as to the whereabouts of his friend and ex-associate, lost no time in seeking him out and offering him an attractive position. Milans accepted, forming a connection that existed for almost twenty years.

But it was not without a touch of regret at having to sever his connection with the little man who had helped him place his foot again on the ladder of respectability, and who now wept when Milans resigned. He loved the little Jew, and is eternally grateful for his trust in him when trust meant so much.

* * *

Years later Milans met the little Jew. It was on a subway train. Unseen at first by Milans, the Jew sat for several minutes staring at the well-dressed figure of the man who bore such a fundamental likeness to the bum whom he had put to work for fifty cents that day years ago, and yet who now looked more like a banker than a printer. Finally, he gathered up enough courage to approach Milans, hat in hand, to inquire if his eyes had deceived him.

Hat in hand! Milans remembers with pleasure that mark of respect, for to him it proved that God's changing Grace had effected a tremendous difference in his outward appearance as well as a wonderful change in his inward life.

The Jew told Milans that the little shop had outgrown its old location. Acting on the tip given him by Milans he had made and saved enough to enlarge his plant and employ a considerably larger force than just the one bum who looked much the worse for liquor, on whose return after the first day's wages had been paid, he had to gamble.

Then, having saved his choicest bit of news till last, he shyly told Milans that prosperity was not the only thing that had come to him. He had just been married . . . and that had been made possible by the profits from the little shop which Milans' hand, charged with skill and "printer's luck," had touched with the touch of Midas!

XXII

THE PERSONAL TOUCH

THIS account would not be complete without some further reference being made to the part played in Milans' restoration by the faithful officers of the Salvation Army corps where he was converted. These women made the most of that most valuable of all soul-saving methods—that of the personal touch. To their persistence and faith Milans gives credit for the spiritual stature he has attained as well as for his first step altar-ward.

It may well be that those who are interested in the business of saving souls ascribe undue importance to the impersonal appeal. This is a day of mass production, and perhaps almost unnoticed, the spirit of the age has permeated the plan of religious attack. Unconsciously preachers calculate their opportunities by the size of the crowd, and are wont to estimate the good accomplished by the numbers met.

There is the crowd before them. Many have come from great distances to hear. As they rise to speak the magnetism of the open minds of their listeners challenges them, and they ascend to heights of sincerity and eloquence. And, if they are honest, without in any way belittling the inspiration that comes from on high, it must be admitted that much of their smug satisfaction after such an effort comes from the parading of an ego that whispers that what they have done is not at all bad. They realize that the audience itself, perhaps more even than Heaven above, was responsible for those flights of oratory. The thrill of being heard! Crowd conscious, they had worked under the spell of the peculiar magnetism that often draws a speaker away beyond his ordinary ability.

It must be admitted further that it is a considerably easier job to preach at, than deal with, talk to, and live out.

And what of the results? What percentage of those addressed from the pulpit and platform find their way into the Kingdom as a direct result of impersonal evangelism? Very small, it is to be feared. The long distance appeal made from the rostrum, when it does result in conversions, usually only clinches half-decisions already arrived at through other influences. The heart of many an earnest and gifted speaker has been broken by the lack of visible results of his preaching.

This is not an attempt to minimize preaching. There is a place for it, a big place, a God-appointed place. But it must be kept where the Christ, by example and precept, put it in a position second to personal work.

Men are not machines. Souls cannot be turned out like so many autos, or radios, or books. Mass production does not work so well with those who are so human as to respond more quickly to a little love, a little thoughtfulness, a little personal interest than to anything else in the world.

Professor William James, in his book "The Varieties of Religious Experience" says, "General Booth, the Founder of The Salvation Army, considers that the first vital step in saving outcasts consists in making them feel that some decent human being cares enough for them to take an interest in the question whether they are to rise or sink." And that kind of interest must manifest itself in something more than pulpit utterances.

Perhaps the world-wide success of The Salvation Army is due, more than any other, to the fact that outcasts are made to feel that somebody *does* care, and is kind.

"So many faiths and so many creeds,
So many paths that wind and wind;
When what this old world mostly needs
Is just the art of being kind."

Captain Cameron and the others at the corps knew that art. They knew that kindness and love have won more souls to righteousness than all the doctrines and creeds put together. Perhaps they were not sufficiently educated to be able to expound doctrines, but they could be kind. They could reflect the spirit of their Master.

This indeed was their principal engine of warfare against sin. Perhaps they had observed how ineffectual is the attempt to make the walls of Jericho fall by the blare and crash of bombastic preaching. Doubtless they had proved that the weapons of tenderness, of love, and above all, of persistence, were the only weapons that could prevail. But however they came by their convictions, these officers most certainly lived them out.

* * *

In the atmosphere of faith and solicitude at the corps, Milans grew and flowered. And when, on the Sunday night following his conversion, he came again to the altar simply because the sacred place where he had received so much now drew him there with a promise of greater strength, they encouraged him into a still greater reliance, a more perfect trust in God.

The officers not only approved his progress in cleanliness of heart, they heartily applauded his cleanliness of outward appearance as well. One of the natural results of his new life was a desire to be clean bodily, to get into respectable clothes, to cast off forever every rag and button which had any connection with those days he had spent on the Bowery.

While working with the Jew, by practising the strictest economy, he was able to save enough to replenish his wardrobe, bit by bit. And as each passing week improved his personal appearance, so each passing day brought an increase of his self-respect and confidence.

Then one day, at the end of the third week after his conversion, he was able to purchase a complete new outfit—suit, patent leather shoes, everything. The next day, Sunday, he was a little late getting to the morning meeting. When he arrived at the door, Captain Cameron was leading the singing of a hymn. But seeing him in the new outfit entering the door, she gestured for a cessation of the singing and cried:

"Wait! Wait! Glory to God! Look at Brother Milans!"

He says now that this caused him some embarrassment, but he appreciated this evidence of her pride in him, a pride which bore all the marks of a mother's esteem for her newly-dressed child.

Every night, with but few exceptions, he went from work to the hall. The officers rejoiced in him, urged him to testify, schooled him in faith, nurtured the new life within him, and fanned within him the flame of ambition to save others that was already appearing.

If he was absent from one of the meetings there would be a little note in the lodging-house office for him the next day, telling him how very much they had missed both him and his testimony. Invitations reached him to special events at the corps, and to each note was appended an assurance that they were praying for him nightly at the quarters.

Such loving training and care could but have anything but an uplifting effect on the young convert. He felt that there was no sin he could commit that could be half so black as would be the violation of the officers' trust. He told himself that he must make good as a Christian—for their sakes as well as his own. The fact that they never worried about his falling silently told him that should he do so, his failure would break their hearts.

And he who had received so largely of kindly interest and tender sympathy became one of personal evangelism's most earnest sponsors in the corps.

Milans caught from these officers the spirit that made it imperative that he should devote every moment of his spare time to bringing others to Him Who had brought his heart to life, Who had lifted him from shame, Who had given him an appetite for things more thrilling than whiskey, more satisfying than alcohol.

* * *

We have looked before at his intense nature. We have seen him enthusiastically going to the end of everything he undertook—play, work, or sin. This intensity had made him in turn "a real kid," a master craftsman, a successful editor, and finally an "incurable" bum. And though after that nature of his had gone through the renewing fires of God's salvation, it was purged of many things, it still retained and redirected those valued energies of intensity. He became a zealot for the saving of other men.

His enthusiasm soon won for him an appointment to "local officership"—a status which in The Salvation Army corresponds to that of lay officership in a church, and which indicates that its holder, though non-salaried, is charged with some specific responsibility in the corps of which he is a "soldier."

His first, and perhaps most enjoyable, position was that of Penitent-Form Sergeant. He proved himself especially valuable in persuading seekers to come to the penitent-form, and no less adept, once he had got them, at "bringing them through" . . . an Armyism meaning the helping of penitents into the experience of conversion.

Kneeling with his arm across the shoulders of some man trembling in unbelief, he himself was his biggest argument for the overthrow of all obstacles in the way of the sinner who would find deliverance from sin. He was positive that no one could come to that altar a harder case, a more helpless weakling, a more strongly-chained prisoner of habit than he had been. And his own testimony, given gently, kindly and prayerfully, bore many a poor wretch high into the heavens of faith to receive salvation from Him who has said: *"If thou canst believe . . . all things are possible."*

* * *

As a Local Officer, Milans did no little to strengthen the other soldiers. Ever enthusiastic himself, he sought to reproduce in others more lax or backward than himself the spirit that animated him.

It was his privilege on occasion to address the Soldiers' Meetings of his own corps as well as those of other corps to which he was invited with increasing frequency as his reputation spread. At such times his one endeavour was to thrill the soldiery with the limitless possibilities of careful, intelligent and persistent personal dealing.

"The great, bleeding, throbbing heart of The Salvation Army," he would say, "is to be found in its corps. Here it is that the weary sinner comes for rest. Here it is that the drunkard expects to find a conquering Power; here the thief comes for forgiveness, the harlot for purity, the murderer for the Holy Blood that can wash away bloodstain. Here also comes the cynical, the unbelieving, the one who thinks he was gone too far. For one and all of these hearts there is one key, the one Jesus used . . .

love. On this key are to be found the prongs of kindness, sympathy, understanding. And, comrades, you may be assured that it will unlock any heart, however hard and resisting."

He would point to the officers of his own and other corps, urging the soldiers on to an emulation of their self-sacrifice and devotion. He pleaded always for more heart and less head, more simplicity and less formality in the performance of service for others. Always he insisted that the quality of tenderness is the *sine qua non* of the soul-saver's work.

"It is one thing," he would say, "to have the man in clerical robes and with printed prayers appear at the bedside of the sick. It is quite another to feel your shaking hand clasped lovingly in that of a girl with the bonnet while she talks very intimately and very humanly to God in your behalf, and at the close of her petition tells you she knows God hears and cares.

"You and I make up the heart of the great Salvation Army! What kind of heart shall it have?"

Thus did this man who had been saved as by fire go out to rescue others and to strike greater courage to the hearts of other fire-fighters.

* * *

Captain Cameron was proud of her trophy. But never was she quite so proud as when, a year after his conversion, she introduced her finished product, polished and trained, to Colonel McIntyre as one of the original bums who had attended his first great gathering of hopeless wrecks a year previously. Needless to say, the Colonel was delighted and featured Milans as one of the main speakers at the Second Annual Boozers' Convention.

Of the success that attended Milans in his work among the "boozers," more will be told in a later chapter.

XXIII

BREAKING THE NEWS TO MOTHER

CHRISTMAS, 1910, was approaching. The weeks that had passed since his conversion had convinced Captain Cameron that the work in Milans would prove to be a permanent one. So, calling him to her one day, she told him that as a Christian it was now his duty to apprise his relatives of his conversion. At first he objected, maintaining that it would be better for him to go on alone than bring to his loved ones an unpleasant and painful recollection of the one whom they were doubtless trying to forget. They had suffered enough, he argued—why not let the dead past bury its dead?

As usual, however, Milans lost in the argument with the Captain.

He wrote first to Mother Milans. He says that the writing of no other letter ever so affected him. It was the first he had written to her in more than thirty years, and in it he poured out the agony of his soul's remorse. It went to her all blotted with his tears. Because he felt that against her had been his greatest sin, he pleaded for her forgiveness with even more fervour than he had begged God for His pardon.

The letter was posted on Christmas Eve.

* * *

For Christmas Day, Mother Milans had arranged a great family reunion at the old Milans homestead. She was now very old—ninety-two—and was daily getting more feeble. Somehow she had a presentiment that she had not much longer to live, so she determined to gather around her once more all her children, grand-children, and great-grandchildren.

On Christmas morning they were all there—except one.

Mother Milans sat in her room at home as an aged and venerable queen might sit on a throne, receiving from them all their expressions of love in words and gifts. As they stood about her she looked from one to another as though she was counting them, and then said with a deep shadow crossing her previously happy face:

"Thank God, you are all here still, every one of you—except him. He hasn't come yet." And a great tear rolled down her wrinkled cheek.

Many years ago her baby boy had gone away, and for half a life-time she had prayed for God to return him to her. Was God going to take her to Heaven without her faith being rewarded?

But her tears and sadness were destined to be short-lived. Just then the doorbell rang. At the door stood a carrier with a special delivery letter addressed to Mother Milans, and marked "Personal." She asked one of the children to read it to her. It told her, among many, many other things, that her boy had been picked out of the gutters of New York City by the hand of God and that the Saviour was making of him a Christian gentleman.

There were no dry eyes in that company as Mother Milans cried joyfully, "I knew God would do it before I went Home! Now write to him at once and tell him how glad Mother is, and ask him to come right home. I want him."

* * *

To Milans that home-going was cruel in its punishment. Remorse lashed him unmercifully. He feared that Mother might not recognize him. She had not seen him since he had left her many years before, a trim young man of twenty-one years, weighing only one hundred and twenty pounds. Would she be able to see in this great big man of two hundred and fifty pounds her baby boy? Milans was afraid.

Tremblingly he made his way to her home. The door was opened to his ring. He entered as one who walks in a dream—seeing nothing, seeing nobody until he caught sight of her sitting in her bed-room, rocking gently to and fro. He paused at the door irresolute, uncertain. Just then she turned her face his way, her eyes resting for a moment on him inquiringly. A smile of infinite happiness at once flooded the saintly face and she recognized and waved a welcome to the boy of her prayers—her prodigal son, returned at last from the far country where he had trampled her love underfoot and heaped shame and sorrow on her greying head.

"My precious boy has come to me," she cried as the big man flung himself impetuously at her feet and buried his head in her lap to sob out the agony of his soul.

Not a word of reproof. Never a mention of the agony his years of wandering had caused her. She took his face in her little withered hands, smoothed his hair and patted his cheeks, crooning the while: "My boy, my baby! Come to me at last. Oh, but God is good, isn't He?"

Big man and strong though he was, Milans could not choke back his sobs. The happy old mother soothed him quietly, allowing him to have his cry out, like an excitable child.

"I have missed you so, dear boy. And sometimes during those long years I feared that you might stay away too long and not find mother here when you came back. But God has brought you back for me to see, and you're glad to get back to mother's lap, aren't you, dear?"

* * *

For ten days Milans worshipped at his mother's knee, the first House of God he had ever known. Her dear old heart ran riot with love and happiness. Forgotten for a time were the other children—those she had had with her; through all the years they had partaken of her care and affection. Now they could be forgotten while she lavished her affection on the one who had been lost but now was found.

To her, Henry became a child again. The present dropped away like mundane things before the approach of slumber, releasing to her the beautiful dreams she had cherished in her heart. For those ten days she lived, moved, and had her being in the far-distant past, in the hazy days of his childhood. She talked on and on about his childhood and the boyish pranks she had never allowed herself to forget.

Carefully hidden away—to pet and croon over during his long absence—she had kept little things that reminded her of him—little baby clothes, shoes, shirts, and such other tiny things to which mothers give so large a place in their hearts. These she now brought out, and they laughed happily over them together.

They had great times during those ten days—this mother and her son. Among their happiest diversions was singing together the little childish hymns she had taught him. Her voice, like a silver thread, wound about his memory and drew him back through the sinful years to his happy and care-free boyhood.

Then at the end of each day, when the sand-man comes to little boys' eyes, just as had done the baby boy of old, he would bow himself at her knee and say his "Now I lay me down to sleep" with her arm encircling him. And when he awoke in the morning it would be with her kiss on his cheek. The old days of partnership, of joyous, intimate companionship between mother and child were re-lived in those happy ten days.

Came the day of parting. They both had dreaded it. But Mother Milans bore up bravely, and when she kissed him "good-bye" she threw her arms about his neck.

"You are safe now," she said, "I am going to keep on praying for you, my boy, and I know that God will keep you."

Every morning after that day of parting, just as he was leaving for the office, the postman would hand Milans a little message from Mother. In return Mother Milans received every day a love letter from her big son in New York City. They both looked forward to these notes as they did to their meals. The contents were such as sweethearts might send each other. Both of them often wrote of the time when they should again be together.

But Milans was never again to see his Mother alive.

* * *

One morning Mother Milans arose, and was dressed as usual. After breakfast her daughter brought pen and paper and drew up a chair to receive the dictated letter.

"Tell him," said Mother Milans, "I slept well, but I don't feel quite so strong as usual. Tell him that I love him more and more each day, and that I pray constantly that God will keep him for Himself and for me."

The letter dictated, her head drooped forward, and the eyes that had seen so much of life's happiness and been pained so deeply with the shadows of sorrow, were now peacefully shut in death.

Mother Milans had finished her work here on earth. She had brought back to God all the children He had given her. The last one who had wandered so far away was now safe in His keeping. She had with her own eyes seen the proof of cleanness and goodness in him. And she was satisfied.

Mother love and hope had prevailed.

Her last thought, her last breath, her last prayer had been, not for those children who had never wandered and who had spent their lives to make her happy, but for the prodigal who had sinned so grievously against her love, who had caused her years of agony and suffering. And now that he had come home to her, she mercifully forgot that he had been the vilest of sinners, and rejoiced only in the fact of his return.

How like God!

Is it surprising that Milans insists that the theologians have things all wrong when they speak of the "Fatherhood of God?"

"It should be the *Motherhood of God,*" he states with conviction.

Perhaps he is right!

XXIV

SUNRISE AND REUNION

IN the majority of the preceding chapters the story of Henry F. Milans is cast in shadows. It has been billed on the boards as drama—dark, pathetic—with no little of tragedy prevailing. But the curtain has descended forever on the sadder acts; God Himself has rung it down, and there will be no further attempt to peep back stage. The grim clouds of tragedy have passed by. The scenes are now of rosier hue, and Romance—that tender will-o'-the-wisp which long ago fled before the inrush of grosser things—reappears.

Curtain up.

Milans, moving in the sunshine of his new experience, now finds life just a little lonely. Hitherto, in the times of his greatest happiness, there had always been a dear one, an intimate one, to share his joys. So as the days pass he is overcome with a great longing for the Unusual Woman. For weeks he broods over the possibility of ever having the chance to make up to her, even in a small way, for the heartbreak he caused her. Could she, would she, ever again return to him?

Then at the insistence of Captain Cameron he determines to try.

Two days before Christmas he sees in a Nassau Street book shop an attractive Christmas card on which is penned a touching sentiment: "Today I'm thinking of you because it is Christmas. And tomorrow I'm going to think of you because it is the day after Christmas. And so on throughout the year I'm going to think of you."

Purchasing the card, he hurries to his room where he appends his name, nothing more, to the printed message. He has learned that the Unusual Woman has returned from the West and is living with relatives in Brooklyn. She has not heard from him, or of him, since that day long ago when, for her health's sake, she had to leave him. She is not aware whether he is alive or dead. How will she receive the news of his existence? Certainly the card will tell her that something worthwhile has happened to him. It is with no little uncertainty and no little prayer that he posts the card so that it will reach her at the right time.

No reply comes for several days.

Then here is a card for him. There is no writing on this one either, just the picture of a dove with an olive branch in its mouth. But in it he reads a meaning that causes his heart to leap in a dare to hope.

With the cunning of a wise suitor, he allows a few days to slip by to give her curiosity time to flower. Then he sits down and pens a long letter in which he tells all—his conversion, his new-found strength, his conquest of the appetite, his Salvation Army friends. He says in this letter that he fears that all this will be hard for her to believe, but he wants her to know of the change in him.

In a week or so a letter is handed to him. It is from her. He opens it in trepidation. It is kindly, but very formal, starchy. She is glad to hear of the change . . . she hopes he will make something real of it . . . her health is still bad, but is receiving good care at home . . . good wishes . . . Yours truly. That last—the cold "Yours truly" almost takes the heart out of him. Yet he is not discouraged.

The sagacious lover again allows Time to tease Curiosity.

A month later he writes the second letter—he wants to keep in touch with her—he is interested in her health developments—he does not expect her to believe in him—but he wants her to know that he still loves her.

Her reply is more cordial. She rejoices that God has come to him, as she has unceasingly prayed that He might. She even admits that as last Christmas had approached she had conceived the idea of sending some money to a certain Bowery mission with the request that they should find him if possible, and, if he was in distress, to give him the money. She closes by saying that she is praying that God will keep him.

In the meantime Milans has prospered. He is now mechanical manager of the Brieger Press with a salary that is more than ample and a bank account that is steadily accumulating. He looks prosperous, and he *is* prosperous. Strict living has bleached out the bloated face and robbed the nose of its headlight conspicuousness. He is not ashamed to meet any one. He very much wants to meet a certain *someone.*

When next he writes to that "someone," he asks her to have dinner with him, suggesting a Saturday afternoon when he will be off work and they can have an opportunity to be alone in some quiet place and talk.

She replies that she would very much like to do so, but does not think it wise . . . it would only reopen an old wound that is still capable of causing her much pain.

But he waits; she is coming his way.

Another month slips by and the request is renewed. And after three months of his insistence, aided and abetted by curiosity and revived interest on her part, the invitation is accepted.

* * *

He dresses in his best for the occasion. A flower is in his bottonhole, his trousers are creased to knife-edge sharpness, he is splendid in fine linen and attractive tie, he swings a cane. His appearance stamps him as nothing less than a Wall Street banker on a holiday.

They are to meet at the New York entrance to Brooklyn Bridge. As he stands there, waiting, thousands of persons, off to Coney Island for the afternoon are thronging the trysting place.

Suddenly he sees her coming, a slight figure pushing her way through the crowds, her eager eyes searching for him. He knows for whom she is looking . . . an unkempt figure with bloated face and red nose, the only Henry she ever knew in those latter years of her misery.

His heart vaults to his throat; he wants to rush forward and take her in his arms. But he checks the desire. He allows her to hunt for a few minutes.

Then, suddenly he stands before her. She looks up timidly as at a stranger, then her face is swept with surprised recognition at the vision of prosperity before her —her husband. For just a moment she stands off to survey the results of the wonderful change that has been wrought in him. A look of timid, eager pride supplants the stare of incredulity.

Standing thus, they are like an isle in the hurrying tides of the crowd, as utterly apart from the bustle and rush as though they were stranded in the midst of the sea.

Smiling, Milans reaches out for her hand, tucks it in the crook of his arm and leads her away from Brooklyn Bridge and its confusion. They pass Dennett's, the first of the chain restaurants. She pauses at the door.

"Are we going here?" she asks.

"Oh no, I have a better place for you than Dennett's," he replies. He leads the way to an exclusive downtown restaurant which, by its very appearance, suggests the choicest menus and the most reckless prices.

"We're not going here, are we?" she asks wistfully. Then, "Are you sure you have money enough?" He pats her arm reassuringly, and smiles with the indulgence of wealth at the wonder of poverty.

The waiter leads them to a quiet corner, and after the order is given, they talk. Milans tells the long story of his conversion and his subsequent success; she relates the events of her life since they last saw one another.

Dinner over, she does not want to leave him, so they go over to St. Paul's Church where they seat themselves to talk again, her pride in him growing with each passing minute.

* * *

Subsequent meetings on Saturday afternoons come easily and regularly. Then Sundays also begin to see them together. Often at the Church of the Ascension, Fifth Avenue and Tenth Street, they attend the recitals, and, sitting under the spell of the organ, live over again the old, happy days.

One day, during one of their conversations, he mentions "my bank." She looks up at him in surprise.

"It can't be possible that you have a bank account?" she exclaims. During the past few weeks she had looked incredulously, wide-eyed, but politely silent, at the rolls of bills that he has so nonchalantly pulled out to cross the palms of waiters. But a bank account!

So in order to convince her that God's miracle had extended his holdings to include money as well as mercy, he draws from his pocket a bank book, proudly displaying a healthy balance of several hundreds of dollars.

She looks for a long moment at that balance. And suddenly she is leaning confidentially over the table, and taking his hand in hers, says something that sets the joy-bells ringing in his heart.

"Don't you think it's time we went to housekeeping again? I am lonely for my own home and my husband."

The following Saturdays are spent in looking for a home. After a while they find a beautiful little nest in Washington Heights, opposite a pretty park. Again the Unusual Woman is given *carte blanche* in the furnishing of her home. Milans, for the second time, is forbidden to step inside until he is asked to do so.

What she did for the first honeymoon nest is repeated here. The years have not made her fingers any less adept at adding the intimate touches, or found her any less enthusiastic to recreate a bower for her dreams. The delightful fuss and fatigue of it all have restored the bloom of youth to her cheeks. Her happiness has whisked her back through the years. She is a bride once again.

Then one day the telephone in his office rings to tell him that he may come to dinner. This time he does not bring home to her a body's load of whiskey, but comes with flowers and candy.

When the door opens to admit him to her arms and to the little paradise that she has arranged, they both almost choke with their thanksgiving. Involuntarily they drop to their knees and raise their eyes to the Place where dwells the Author of such blessing, and they blend their voices in happy prayer. At last her God is his God.

Tears are in the Unusual Woman's eyes, for God has given back to her the man of her first honeymoon's dreams.

Paradise is regained.

XXV

HIS WIFE'S COMFORTER

THAT the restoration of Milans was accomplished before the death of those who meant most to him, enabling them while on earth to rejoice in the sight of answered prayer, may be regarded by some as a happy coincidence. But it was more than that; it was Providential.

Had either Mother Milans or the Unusual Woman died during the years of his degradation, his remorse would have been a thousand times more poignant and lasting. To this day his every memory of the sorrow he brought to his loved ones is bitter enough, but had the hand of death removed them before he had opportunity at least to prove that old things had definitely passed away, self-condemnation would have known no bounds.

For the purpose of adding a happy *finale* to the life of Mother Milans, God granted him a few months; it has been seen how well he utilized the time in bringing gladness to her old heart.

In the life of the Unusual Woman, however, the Lord had a still fuller work for him to accomplish. The final chapter of her life, unlike that of Mother Milans, covers a period of many years. For more than fourteen years after their reunion he took care of her, not only providing for her every physical need, but becoming towards the end a mighty bulwark for her faith. If ever man sought by kindness, devotion and vital religion to atone for years of neglect and misdeeds, he did.

Hear the story of how he made those last years the happiest of her life.

The happiest they were in spite of the fact that for the most part they were years of frail health, and often of intense suffering. But here was suffering which now was confined to the body alone. We know that the worst suffering which afflicts the heart, pierces the soul, she was never more to know.

* * *

After the manner of young lovers they eagerly looked forward to time spent in each other's presence. On Sunday mornings, when she was able, they would attend a nearby church service together. The only times when he left her, other than to go to work, was on Sunday evenings, when, keeping up a habit that has been followed ever since his conversion, he went to The Army meetings. Now and then, when she was well enough to do so, she would accompany him to the hall, where she promptly fell in love with the young women officers who had led her husband to Christ.

How proud she was of him! How willingly she would sacrifice his presence with her when she knew he was out on Salvation Army duty! Occasionally, he would be asked to assist Colonel McIntyre in his week-end campaigns. She was glad that he was so active in helping to save others, and often rejoiced with him over some "trophy" won for God.

Their evenings together at home were times of tenderness. As of yore, they would often spend the time singing together the old hymns they both loved. Often they would go over the days when she had been the choir director and he the impulsive young editor whom she had trained to be a tenor soloist. Of these times of their first courtship they would speak as though they were events of only yesterday.

* * *

As the years passed she gradually became more frail. At one time, after submitting to an operation, her health was improved perceptibly. But after a few months of steady improvement, she again began to decline. An examination was made, and the physician informed Milans that she had developed cancer of the breast. From that time forward her decline, while not rapid, was steady, both physically and mentally.

During the twelve years of intermittent suffering which followed, Milans gave her the tender care of an indulgent parent for an only child.

As the superintendent of a large printing house, his earnings were now very substantial, and he spent money freely that her every wish be granted. Servants relieved her household care. A companion was engaged to stay with her constantly. To this woman Milans gave instructions that the Unusual Woman was to have everything she wanted, however needless or even frivolous.

In his tenderness and love the Unusual Woman not only found comfort and great happiness, she found forgetfulness as well. No reference to his days of sin did she ever make. This was not the result of studied effort to avoid a distasteful subject—that subject was forgotten.

During the years that Milans had given her the best in him, God had blotted out of her mind the memory of those awful years in which she had been a drunkard's wife. Entirely forgotten were the hours of torture, the betrayal of love, the indignities and shame that his derelictions had brought her.

One night as he held her in his arms, soothing her fevered brow and praying with her, she burst out sobbing. "Oh, I don't want to die now. I'm so happy here with you. You seem to know my very thoughts, and I scarcely wish for anything but it appears. I don't want to die and leave you. *You have been so good to me all of our life together!"*

In that heart of hearts that had been smitten so deeply with the sword thrust of his sin there was no room for the slightest remembrance that he had ever been aught but the tender, solicitous husband that she now knew.

Like Mother Milans—like God—she, too, had forgotten.

As the years sped by her illness became more acute. Doctors gave up hope of any permanent recovery. Finally one day, after having induced a physician to make a thorough examination, Milans was told that his wife was nearing the end. "She will not be with you at the end of this month," prophesied the doctor. In that he was right.

* * *

The passing of the Unusual Woman was as pathetic at it was glorious.

It was during the last days of her life that Milans, once a hopeless outcast from society, became her spiritual guide and comforter. It is a strange thing, this story of the former drunken sot of a husband leading into perfect peace and trust in God a little woman who all her life had served God. Here's how it happened:

As her end drew near, she seemed to become obsessed with a perfect terror of dying. Although she had never in her life been guilty of any of those digressions which the world regards as sins, and although she had been an earnest follower and worker for God since her childhood, she had never come to *know* Him in a personal, intimate way. To her, God, though a reality, was far off. She was afraid of Him. The command "Fear God" meant just that to her.

This attitude toward the Almighty, doubtless the result of the way in which she had been brought up, is not uncommon among professing Christians. There are thousands who recognize God as the Supreme Ruler and Righteous Lord, but who know nothing of any intimate relationship with Him as a loving, tender Father.

Strangely enough, it was Milans who led her into this relationship.

That picture is a touching one which shows her nestling in his arms and resting her poor, tired head on his breast while she listened to him talking to God in his intimate way, gradually banishing her fear and assuring her that "God is Love."

Under the guidance of this man who had once known too well the power of devils, but who now had entered into the secret places of the Father's house, she passed from fear to faith, from Sinai to Calvary, from Law to Grace. In those moments, doubtless the most precious that ever passed between them, death lost its sting.

Think of it!

Milans—the prodigal, the sinful, the one so long lost—leading into a definite knowledge of the Lord as Loving Saviour, Tender Friend and Blessed Comforter this obeyer of His Holy, but austere Law, this diligent servant of Him, whom not knowing, she feared!

It is one of religion's little dramas. Looking at it, we are led to the reflection that perhaps, after all, it is prodigals who get nearest to the real Father heart. Having been forgiven much, they love much, and know intimately.

* * *

A few nights before she died, the Unusual Woman turned her eyes to him and said, "What a pity it is that I have to die now that I know God so well! But I am not afraid any more. I know He loves me. And I love Him!"

Those were her last words.

Milans sat through that long night, watching his beloved one becoming loosened from the shackles of mortality. As life seemed to be ebbing, he leaned over and said, "Sweetheart, do you know me?" Her eyes flickered a "Yes," she made an effort to answer, and the next moment was gone.

The Unusual Woman was buried beneath a mountain of flowers. Three truck-loads of the finest creations of the florist's art were the tributes of her hundreds of friends and loved ones. A huge blanket of violets covered the casket.

She was laid to rest in a beautiful spot in the cemetery that covers the brow of a hill facing the sunrise as it comes up over the Potomac River at Washington.

Later Milans bought up the land surrounding the Unusual Woman's grave, and brought there the body of Mother Milans, as well as that of his father and a sainted sister. There is also room in this spot for all of his immediate family.

When this work was completed his heart exclaimed, "One bright morning when the trump shall sound, and my Lord call for the grave to give back His own, there will be a wonderful gathering on this hilltop. Mother Milans will be here, and my old mate, the Unusual Woman, will be with her, and father will be alongside of them both, and there will be Annie and the dear old sisters.

"And in that blessed company—among those called out of their graves by their blessed Lord—will be the hopeless drunkard who was converted at the penitent-form of The Salvation Army so many years ago, and in whom, because of a miracle of the Living God, old things passed away and all things became new!"

XXVI

CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL OF SALVATION

WHAT is the biggest story in the life of Henry F. Milans? In all the multi-coloured phases of his interesting career, to which event or phase can one point as the most colourful of all?

That question put to ten persons would probably draw ten different answers. The child specialist would point to his boyhood experiences. The moralist would choose the incidents connected with his early influences and later debauches. The mechanic would like to read of his printing days. The sentimentally-inclined would vote for his courtship and marriage. The business man would be attracted to his success. The tragedian would seize upon his fall. The religionist would revel in his conversion. The dramatist would delight in the story of mother's son come home. The novelist would be certain that the final triumph of the Unusual Woman's love represents the high tide of interest.

Each of these is in itself a separate and complete story.

But it may be questioned whether God, if asked to put in His vote, would point to any one of those things as the greatest story of this man's life. It is likely that the ears of Heaven would find the keenest delight in another story . . . that told by a filing cabinet, an unpretentious piece of furniture that occupies a corner of the little office in the Milans home.

This filing cabinet is something more than a piece of furniture. It is the tabernacle of a fervent evangelist—an unique tabernacle, in that it combines in about three square feet of space a platform, a sawdust trail, a mourner's bench, an inquiry room and all the other appurtenances of a soul-saving institution. It is also peculiar for the fact that its operation is not dependent upon either advertising campaigns or free-will offerings. All the expense of its maintenance—both of time (and that spare time, after long hours at his office) and money is borne by the "evangelist" himself.

The audience is a diverse one. Those who compose it have tramped wearily to its threshold from near and far, they are from every walk of life, they represent every social stratum from bum to millionaire. They differ widely in origin, in appearance and in need. But they are all alike in one particular: They are Moral Failures. And because of his sympathetic experience as an ex-failure they have elected Milans as their pastor. The Pastor of the Failures.

To put one's ear down to the stories contained in that filing cabinet is to hear the pulsating heart of defeated humanity. Listening carefully, one might hear the groaning of the great human struggle with sin and evil habits mingled with the glad cry of the soul that has been delivered.

There are letters that laugh, and letters that cry, heart-broken letters, joyful letters, letters of gratitude, letters written on expensive and monogrammed stationery, letters laboriously scrawled with pencil on the cheapest of tablet paper.

Here, in this filing cabinet, is to be found the interesting story of Henry F. Milans, the "Letter-Writing Evangelist."

* * *

How did he get started on this type of service? It had its beginning at The Salvation Army corps, at which he was a soldier; it is an outgrowth of his work there as Penitent Form Sergeant. It has been seen in a previous chapter that he was zealous and whole-hearted in this work, doing his utmost to aid each penitent at the altar to gain his heart's desire. But such thorough-going zeal was not content to let his work stop when the benediction was pronounced and the meeting brought to a close.

When dealing with a penitent at the altar he would note down the facts of the case—the seeker's name, address, occupation, peculiar temptations, weaknesses, gifts, aptitudes, and family problems. The next morning there would be a letter at the person's door—an intimate, personal note that encouraged, strengthened, inspired hope and determination.

If Milans had been unable to attend the meeting himself, the officers of the corps would send him the names of all who had evidenced a desire to live better lives.

The results of his endeavour along this line soon made it apparent, to himself as well as to others, that God had endowed him with a particular ability in letter-writing. It is to be expected that this man, who had been filling editorial chairs for years, would be able to write convincingly, but there is as much difference between editorial writing as compared with correspondence of this character as there is between a lecture and an intimate, personal talk. It is one thing to sway the mind, it is quite another to touch the heart and lead a soul to God.

Soon he extended the scope of his ministry, making it include, not only those with whom he had contact at The Army penitent-form but any and all who might desire his service. In telling his life-story in public meetings he would invite correspondence from any who were the slaves of habits they could not master. In addressing church audiences he would mention that if any hearer had a loved one who had gone astray, he would be glad to try to help such an one by mail. Soon Milans was well acquainted with some heart-breaking family skeletons.

And they continue to come. New members of the filing cabinet congregation are constantly being made. Some present themselves voluntarily as suppliants, some are led by loved ones with breaking hearts, others are forcibly ushered by disgusted and disheartened relatives.

But once they come to him, they become life-time members of his congregation—he never gives them up until they are either won or dead. His labours with not a few of the cases extend over many years.

Where others despair and incline almost to the doctrine that perhaps after all some men may be predestined to be lost, Milans holds on with a tenacity of faith that can be possessed only by one who has been brought up from deep depths himself.

Is any one ever won to Christ by this correspondence school of salvation?

Here is a selection, made at random, of a few of the cases in the file, that are marked "closed." They tell their own story.

* * *

Witness Number One takes the stand.

His story is told mainly by Christmas cards. The subject is a prominent physician of Jersey City. He has a large practice. But he is addicted to drink. As the years pass he imbibes more and more freely, until his wife begins to fear for the safety of his patients. She tries to interest him in church, in religion. But his observation of religion has been narrow; he has seen it at work only in a few inconsistent professors. Occasionally he attends church, but then only as a duty to his wife, whom he loves—he cannot see that Christianity has any message for him. In time his wife leaves him. He goes deeper into drink.

Friends of the family appeal to Milans. Milans begins his silent evangelism. He seeks an occasion to meet the doctor. He follows up this meeting with letters, not at first dealing with the immediate problem, but calculated to win the man's friendship and confidence.

For a time the physician drops out of sight. But Milans succeeds in locating him, and soon sends along a Christmas card, following it a few days later with a letter directing him to the Great Physician. There is no reply. But the "Salvation sales-letters" are sent at regular intervals.

The following Christmas a card is delivered to Milans. On it are the names, inscribed by pen and ink, of the physician *and wife!*—Milans knows they are reunited. The next Christmas brings another card, and this time the names are *printed*—Milans knows they are now in better circumstances. Another Christmas arrives, and this time the card is *engraved.* In a few weeks a letter finds its way to the filing cabinet. It is a long one, full of appreciation. It tells of the doctor's conversion through the letters, of the reunion of husband and wife, and it states that they are now happy and prosperous.

* * *

Witness Number Two we will call James Smith, for the very excellent reason that that is not his name.

He is a skilled mechanic . . . a pressman. He comes from a celebrated New York family. His grandfather was head of one of the largest publishing houses in New

York, and was the man who organized a paper-covered "Library," the circulation of which was counted by the millions and distributed in every state in the Union. Jim's trouble is double-barrelled—dope and whiskey. His little wife is broken-hearted.

One day Jim disappears, but Milans obtains his address from a mutual friend, and begins to write to him. For several years there is not even the encouragement of a reply. Then one day Milans received this letter:

"I must write to tell you of the happy home you have made for us. Jimmy and I are reunited and, best of all, he is converted and does not indulge in those terrible habits any more! All my life I have dreamed of the kind of love I am now experiencing with my saved husband. We have bought a nice home in Brooklyn and are wonderfully happy."

A note is made on this case that Jimmy died a victorious Christian.

* * *

Witness Number three is a heart-broken woman in Lowell, Mass.

Her first letter says that she has a friend who has heard Milans speak, and this friend has urged her to write him about her husband, an incorrigible drunk. She says that she is a little afraid to have Milans write direct as her husband has a furious temper which frequently gets loose when he is dealt with regarding his appetite, and she fears bodily harm.

But Milans writes. It is a straight-forward, manly sort of letter, in which he, as man to man, relates his own experience. The wife receives the letter and puts it where her husband can eventually pick it up. He comes home after a spree of two days. She watches him from another room; he picks up the letter; she trembles. But she is surprised to see him reading it carefully. Suddenly he bows his head in his hands and sobs violently . . . the first time she had seen him weep for many years.

Her last letter is written in a note of joy. He is converted. They are happy. Thanks to Milans!

* * *

Witness Number Four comes from Virginia.

He is a dope addict whom the word "fiend" literally describes. He is discouraged almost to the point of suicide. The interest of the "Letter-Writing Evangelist" is enlisted. A confidence between the two is established. The dopester frames two of Milans' letters and hangs them in his room so that he may read them more often. In time the soul of the man catches fire with the insistent faith expressed in those letters, and he kneels alone in his room to ask God to deliver him. One day, after more than two years of proving the lasting power of his deliverance, he appears before the minister of the Methodist Church which he has been urged to join and says, "I'm ready now to take any obligation and join your church . . . I am cured and saved."

* * *

Such work is not a ministry of the limelight, or of ordination, or of vested robes or clerical garments. But listening to the stories that come out of that filing cabinet, one is convinced that on the Great Day of Accounting it will be found that Henry F. Milans, dreaming away there on his typewriter, envisioning gardens from dump-heaps, and beautiful pottery from marred clay, has had no little part in peopling Heaven with the "incurables" of his generation whom everyone but he and His Master had despaired of ever saving.

XXVII

TROPHIES

HEAVEN'S estimate of Milan's service to the Kingdom of God would not, however, be confined to his letter-writing evangelism alone.

Of equal importance to that ministry is the tremendous amount of good he has accomplished in the two decades in which he has been telling his story from platform and pulpit. Since his conversion he has delivered countless addresses to audiences in churches, on street corners, in Salvation Army halls, in prisons, over the radio, at men's clubs and every conceivable place where audiences gather.

In telling his life story there is nothing of the holy braggart about Milans. In him is to be found no trace of the inflated ego that finds an unhallowed satisfaction in parading thrilling, and sometimes, exaggerated stories of "what a wicked sinner I was."

On the contrary, he will never tell his experiences unless he is first convinced that there is some one in the audience who may become a spiritual beneficiary of his effort. He speaks, not as an entertainer, but as a witness for his Lord. His is a sensitive spirit; he shudders at the thought of displaying himself as a curio. He does not mind disappointing those who come to gawp; but he delights to aid those who remain to pray.

Milans much prefers the work that takes him among men who, like himself, have stumbled. Though he has occasionally questioned the good of addressing select groups of people who were only listening to his story with a morbid relish for the sensational; he has never been known to turn down an invitation to talk to men in the Bowery, in Men's Industrial Homes or to any gathering where he knew there were men who will listen eagerly, as he did before his conversion, to a living witness to the fact that there is a Power strong enough to light again in their hearts the fires of hope.

These are the men whom he feels he is called to save, and he goes after them—individually and in groups—in a spirit of earnestness and love that reflects the spirit of his Master. Henry F. Milans is never quite so happy as when, with all the eloquence of his zeal, he is pounding home to the heart of some poor wayfarer the declaration, "I *know* that God can save you and cleanse you, because He has saved and cleansed me!"

* * *

An interesting story of one of his visits to the Bowery is told in a letter to Commissioner McIntyre, dated February 4, 1928.

"I went down to the Memorial Hotel on the Bowery last Sunday. Had a great meeting with (Colonel) Winchell's gang of bums. On the way, thinking I was a bit late, I jumped into a taxi. The taxi and I drew up with some snap in front of the hotel, and up stepped one of a number of bums who were forming the bread-line on the sidewalk. With a very genteel bow this fellow opened the door of the car and respectfully waved me out. I thanked him for his courtesy, and then turned to survey that line of miserable creatures. Memory came rushing in and told me that the last time I had stood on this spot I looked a hundred per cent worse than the fellow who opened the cab door. It was at the Bowery Mission, next door, where I had waited two hours in a similar breadline, cold and hungry, only to be turned away because the place was filled. You can easily sense my gratitude to God as I stood again where the breadline still forms and realized that I was redeemed and now a Christian gentleman.

"When I got inside the hotel I found the place crowded. Bums jammed the hall and lobby and filled every inch of standing room down the centre aisle. Men were packed in there like sardines and they smelled just as familiarly as anything could . . . just as we bums did on the day when you corralled us in Memorial Hall for your first Boozers' Convention. It was so realistic, that smell, that I caught myself wanting to scratch; my back actually felt creepy.

"I enjoyed being with the men, and we had a good time together. They seemed to be proud of me—one of their own kind who could speak the language of the Bowery—that I looked so prosperous, so much like a winner. When I told them of my experience years ago in the breadline next door, and what my thoughts had been regarding the time when I had stood with the others, hungry and shelterless, they broke into a roar of applause. Poor fellows! Hopeless themselves, they cheer the fellow who dares to allow God to put hope in his heart. It was an inspiration to talk to them, and a greater one to see a number come to the penitent-form and profess conversion."

* * *

But despite the advantage of being able to appear before this class of men with the argument "He did it for me," Milans realizes that for the sowing of the seed of faith he has chosen the very stoniest ground of humanity. The despair of this class has led them to a type of cynicism and unbelief that is far more binding than that which springs from intellectual doubts.

They like to listen to the stories of those who have conquered, although they cannot banish a fear that the dogmatic doctrine, "God is able!" is impotent to cope with the irresistible appeal of the saloon and the harsh reality of hunger. Their many vain attempts to battle the appetite have thrown off by-products of misery and unbelief, and these have encrusted their hearts with a stony hardness almost impossible to penetrate.

No such sales energy and persistence is required as that necessary to "sell" faith to a hopeless bum . . . faith in the salesman, faith in the salesman's Christ, faith in the bum himself.

* * *

But let Milans, who knows them so well, tell of the difficulties facing any evangelist to the bums.

"I know too well how utterly hopeless everything seems to him (the bum). He believes absolutely that there isn't any chance of his ever getting up again. He just can't arouse himself enough to take hold and honestly believe. There is so much to be overcome, and so little strength left to fight with. He is sensitive—more so than is ordinarily thought—to the scorn of every one who looks at him, and human love, without which he cannot be aroused to a worth-while effort spiritually, is denied him in every face he looks upon. He can find no inspiration in his companions, nor in his habitat in the human rat-holes of the slums, nor in the feel of the policeman's night-stick. So he just hangs on limply to whatever life he has, unable to *try* to be better. Man has failed miserably to help him; he is certain that God can do no better.

"Yes, it's the steely casing of hopelessness and resignation in which the poor bum becomes imprisoned by his life of desolateness and dissoluteness that is such a handicap to our efforts to reclaim him. It's so easy to just stay bad that he comes to believe it must be impossible for him ever to be good. If once we can arouse in him an ambition to be clean again, there is hope. And if we then foster this aroused ambition by loving, kindly, patient interest we are likely to be rewarded with another hand-picked, upstanding Christian whom we can truthfully call a Twentieth Century Miracle."

Talking thus to Christian people, Milans has been able to inspire not a few earnest workers to a greater appreciation of this field, where the harvest is so great and the labourers so few. And always he emphasizes the importance of kindness.

He says, "Helping to their feet again men and women who have gone wrong is a work that the good God rejoices to do. This being so, we who profess his Name can well afford to help. Is it not a worth-while work to turn such human liabilities into tangible, producing human assets in your community? God thinks so! And your part in it is: 'the hand upon the shoulder in a friendly sort of way.' With your hand there, you'll find it so much easier to direct them to the Power that never fails."

In meetings among the bums Milans works out these theories of his. Although naturally eloquent, he makes no attempt at oratory. His is simply an earnest, heart-to-heart talk. He makes no effort to depict in melodious terms the glories of the hereafter. He proclaims liberty and a new life here. And a host of "trophies," garnered from the lowest and worst, bear witness to the effectiveness of his methods.

* * *

It is not to be thought, however, that all the Failures and Hopeless Ones are to be found on the Bowery. Milans has made some of his choicest converts in what would appear to be the most unlikely hunting-grounds. In churches, where he has conducted meetings, he has often been able to win some incorrigible who, with the inexplicable way in which the bad hovering in the light of the good, has persisted in keeping near to the church but refused to partake of the spirit of worship.

Such a one did Milans find in Milford, Delaware. In this case he resorted to a means of grace that it is to be feared has been largely neglected in evangelism. Let him tell the story:

"I met this man in a Methodist church in Milford, whither I had gone to address a meeting. He was a good farmer but a poor husband and citizen. His wife had given him up years ago. She was convinced that he was no good, and would never be better. His reputation, and he rather enjoyed it, was the rottenest in the country. He came to my meeting, and he came hilariously drunk. But before I got through with the pathetic side of my story—the home-going of Mother Milans—this man broke down and came to the altar rail, crying that he wanted to be made good. He rolled over the floor, and howled out his remorse in no gentle tones. He almost broke up the meeting.

"But I felt that he was sincere, and before I left town I told him that I was going to keep in touch with him. The very day I got back to New York I began to write to him. In my first letter I made it plain that I expected that he was converted, and then explained that having religion meant that he would be expected to do things that he had never done before. I told him that I did not believe he had kissed his wife since his wedding day. (And there I had hit it right.) But I told him that it was time he began making love to her all over again.

"He was to ask God at breakfast to keep him through the day, and then before he went to the barn he was to kiss his wife and tell her she was a good old girl. He was to repeat the performance of this rite at noon, and again when he came in from the fields at night.

"Now I had planned this so as to be fairly certain of the wife's co-operation; he could not read, she must read the letter to him. And I depended upon her having romance enough left in her worked-out soul to *want* him to make love to her, to expect it to the extent of standing ready to be kissed before he went out to work.

"A year later I was announced to speak at a meeting about a hundred miles from Milford. When I came to the pulpit platform I saw someone wave to me from the audience. And who was it but my farmer and his wife, both splendidly dressed? At the risk of breaking up the dignity of the service I left the platform and rushed down the aisle to greet them. I atoned for my rash action later by telling the audience the story. And to prove the truth of it the ex-drunken farmer stood up and glorified God in a beautiful testimony.

"The wife told me blushingly that her husband had been carrying out my first lessons in the Evidences of Religion ever since the day he had received my letter. She was being kissed with saintly regularity! As I had hoped, by doing that he had received the impression that religion truly means the doing of new things. He is still a staunch Christian, and they are prosperous."

And, adds Milans for the benefit of preachers who would start off their converts properly, the idea is not copyrighted!

* * *

Mention should also be made of the “chain prayer league,” of which Milans is the conductor.

In his meetings there are invariably a large number who ask him to pray for them, or for some loved one. This he promised to faithfully do, and enlists them immediately in his praying band. In the circle he has thus created are all kinds of persons, praying for all kinds of things.

Many Christian workers also have joined the chain. And all are instructed to pray together at the same time, no matter where they are.

Milans announces that at nine o’clock each night, at his desk in his office, he will pray especially for those who request it, and invites the requestors to join him at that same hour. He religiously observes this worship himself. No matter of business is so important or no place so inconvenient as to induce him to break the chain of which he is the chief link. Each evening at nine o’clock finds him either on his knees or with bowed head and closed eyes.

One of his evangelist friends, when he finds his meeting still going at that hour, invariably breaks into it abruptly to announce; “A man in New York is praying for me at this minute. Let us join with him.”

XXVIII

PUBLIC WORK

PREACHERS, knowing of the remarkable conversion of Henry F. Milans, have seized upon his story as an ideal illustration of the power of religion for pulpit use. Told with sundry variations, and under a score of aliases, it has been woven into hundreds of Gospel addresses, inspiring many Christians toward a greater trust in the Power of God and leading many a wayward wanderer to put to the test this God who so miraculously delivered Milans.

Not only has the story of his experience been a means of strength to Christian workers and a means of salvation to sinners, but the man himself has had his influence on the ministry of God's anointed.

Among those who knew him intimately was the late Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman, one of the most noted evangelists since D. L. Moody.

That great and successful man of God, who did so much in his day to dignify evangelism, recognized in Milans an unusual product of God's regenerating power. The two became close friends. Dr. Chapman used him in some of his larger meetings, where he featured him as "one of the greatest of present-day miracles." He is quoted as saying that he was acquainted with most of the famous converts of America, but he considered "Henry F. Milans the greatest of them all."

In one of his campaigns, Dr. Chapman asked Milans to sit in the balcony, directly in front of the pulpit. "I like to have you there," explained the evangelist. "Your face looking down at me helps me to preach this great, uttermost Gospel!"

* * *

As an illustration of that love for the lost which should be the working power of every true follower of Christ, Milans tells an incident which happened in a meeting conducted by Dr. Chapman in the largest theatre in Elizabeth, N. J. The audience was composed mainly of Christians, and those of the élite variety. Admittance was by ticket only.

Milans, seated in the audience, suddenly espied a bum, dirty, dishevelled, sitting in a solitary chair right below the platform where Dr. Chapman stood preaching. How the bum managed to get into such an assembly it is impossible to say. He was unspeakably dirty, and his clothes were in rags. But there he was; and when Milans discovered him no one seemed yet to have noted his presence. As soon as the personal workers began moving through the vast audience, Milans left his seat and worked his way up to the bum.

In a few minutes Dr. Chapman noticed Milans talking intimately with the man, one arm thrown across the back of the bum's chair, which he was sharing. As soon as the consecration service commenced, down on their knees together went the bum and Milans, an odd pair in that assemblage—one dressed as a gentleman, the other in rags. Milans was weeping, his arm about the dirty bum's neck. The bum also was sobbing. Such a scene was too much for the earnest evangelist. He stopped the singing and said, "A soul is being born again right at my feet. Let us pray."

After no little tears and supplication, the bum was converted. They rose to their feet together, bum and ex-bum, and Milans, drawing out a handkerchief, offered it to the bum to dry his tears. The bum looked at the clean and folded linen, and shook his head. "I'll spoil it," he sobbed. Milans saw the chance for an illustration, and holding out the handkerchief, said tenderly,

"Look, brother, God has saved you. Your heart is now whiter than this handkerchief. Take it." Reaching out his hand, the bum took it, but refused to apply it to his tears. Instead, he tucked it in his bosom, its whiteness against his dirt—symbol of his newness of heart against the black of his past.

Chapman, watching from the platform, wept for joy.

* * *

During the World War, Milans was associated often with Charles M. Alexander, the singing evangelist and co-worker with Dr. Chapman in his world-around revival campaigns. With the Alexander party, he visited some of the large encampments of the U. S. Army in the Eastern States. In the meetings which were held with the men of the Army and Navy, hundreds of converts were made. Milans' story which he entitled "Mother's Love" helped many a lad to go overseas with the determination to keep himself pure and ready to meet his God should duty lead him to his death.

At the close of the meetings, Mr. Alexander often persuaded the boys who had come out to the altar to telephone home to their mothers the news that they had given their hearts to God. One young boy, with tears streaming down his face, stood with Milans at the telephone and told his mother in Spokane, Washington, that he was now converted. "My, but she's happy!" said the boy when he put the receiver down.

In connection with their work at the camps, Milans and the Alexander party gave away many thousands of Testaments to the soldiers and sailors. Mr. Alexander bought them in 20,000 lots and distributed them gratis to all who would receive and promise to read them. One of these little Testaments, with the name and address of Milans as the giver inscribed on the fly leaf, was returned to him from New London, Connecticut, some years ago. It had been found on the sidewalk, and the finder was thoughtful enough to mail it to Milans. Its sailor owner had carried it for eight years before losing it. Possibly the little book had travelled completely around the world —who can say with what effect on its carrier?

* * *

One of the large men's Bible classes in the city of Baltimore is the result of a Milans meeting for men years ago in a certain church of that city. At the conclusion of his talk, and during the singing of a hymn, Milans walked down the aisle. On one of the end seats of a row he saw a man to whom he felt constrained to speak. When he did so, putting his arm across the man's shoulder, the other broke out in tears. He told Milans that this was the first time he had attended church for thirty years, and his life had been almost completely wrecked by drinking. His lifelong occupation was even now in the balance. Milans asked him to go forward and pray. The man refused, but promised to come again to church that night. He was true to his promise, and after the sermon Milans again approached him. This time the man yielded, went to the altar and was converted. Shortly afterwards, upon Milans' insistence that he be about his Father's business, he organized a Bible class which is operating to this day and has attained large proportions.

* * *

No human power or agency, however, is ever a hundred per cent successful in winning souls. Tempering joy with disappointment are the inevitable defeats experienced by every winner of souls. The recollections of the failures tinges with regret the rejoicing over those won.

Particular mention shall be made here of two men whom Milans failed to win. Though the failure was through no fault of his own, he says that Heaven for him would be just a little brighter if he could feel that they were both numbered among his victories.

The first, who shall be known as Anderson, was a young man who came in the capacity of salesman to the printing house of whose mechanical department Milans was head. He was a fine, clean, intelligent scion of a rich family who, desiring to see him established, bought for him an interest in the Brieger printing plant. It was not long before Anderson's weakness became known; he began to stay away from work for weeks at a time, drunk. Brieger, whose experience with Milans had made him despise both liquor and its consumer, with equal vehemence, insisted that Anderson should be discharged immediately and his interest in the concern bought out.

The family were distraught at the man's inability to make good, and came one night in a body to ask whether something could not be done to save him. Brieger shrugged his shoulders and said: "Go out in the factory and talk to Milans. He knows what to do."

When Milans learned their mission he asked whether they had tried the sanitariums which made a specialty of caring for inebriates.

"They can treat him there, but they do not guarantee to cure him," said Milans. "It will cost you from $20.00 to $75.00 a day for treatment."

"But isn't there some place where he can be not only treated, but *cured*?" they enquired. "Mr. Brieger says you know of a place where it can be done."

"Yes, there is such a place," was the reply, "if you will let me take him down to The Salvation Army hall, I'm sure we can get him cured there."

Dismay and haughtiness arrived at about the same instant on their faces. They were thoroughly insulted at the suggestion.

"He has not gone *that* far yet," said the family spokesman, a lawyer, in a stilted tone. "Thank you, and good evening!"

Six weeks later the man who had been too aristocratic for the God of The Salvation Army to save, died in one of the lowest dives on the Bowery, where he had hidden away to drink and die alone.

* * *

The second man whom Milans regrets that he failed to win is a figure already familiar to the reader.

One day as Milans was walking through the plant he heard above the rumble of the presses a high-pitched voice that sounded hauntingly familiar. Turning toward the place from which the voice came, he saw squirming out from beneath one of the big presses a man whom he immediately recognized. It was Andy—Andy, his companion and instructor of the Bowery days! Andy, who had often made misery less miserable by his chumming and self-sacrificing care! Andy, the happy-go-lucky, the care-free—as true a friend as bum ever had!

So glad was he to see him that his first impulse was to grab the little man by the hand and fling his arms about the scrubby neck. On second thought, however, he turned to one of the foremen and asked who the new hand was. He was told that Andy was just a bum, who, though an expert feeder of small presses, was so shiftless that the foreman had given him a day of work wiping up the presses.

Milans walked over to the press and, without speaking, stood near where Andy was alternately whistling and talking to himself. Milans smiled. It was the same old Andy . . . always, incessantly talking, his tongue keeping up a rapid fire of good-natured chatter. Soon Andy realized the presence of Milans, and turning his eyes, was greeted with the smile that the other could not restrain.

Even now Andy did not recognize him. God had wrought such a change in Milans that this man who had lived with him, slept with him, loved him and fought for him, did not recognize in the big, important-looking man his pal of former days in the dead-houses!

"Hello, boss," said Andy, grinning. "This sure is a tough job for a gent like me."

"Get busy," snapped the foreman. What business had a bum talking so familiarly with the superintendent?

Though Milans longed to make himself known to Andy, his better judgment told him that should he do so the little man might take embarrassing advantage of the friendship—consider himself a privileged character, and become unmanageable. He wanted to help Andy—to save him. When that was accomplished, then would be the time to spring the surprise. So drawing the foreman to one side, he gave orders that the little man was to have every chance to pull himself into a decent job, and further, that Andy was not to be discharged without his knowledge, no matter what happened.

During the days that followed Milans quietly endeavoured to influence his old chum. Every day he walked out to the press room to speak kindly to him. In response Andy would only talk a volume to each of Milans' sentences. It was difficult to get anything constructive over the barrage of Andy's sympathy-stirring patter. Andy was sure he had never had a square deal in life, he had been mistreated, cuffed about, never had a chance—and so on. But Milans continued to be kind to him, and planned to win his slum-born and Bowery-bred soul.

With the coming of pay-day and a few dollars, however, the prospects of a steady job glimmered before the attraction of the dead-house and the care-free life of the bum, and Andy forgot he had a steady job to come back to. Milans was disappointed, and often scanned the crowds about the saloons looking for him.

Just once more did he see Andy. As he walked down Park Row one day, coming near "The Doctor's"—that infamous den in which he had spent his first and many another night as a bum—he almost collided with a dirty, tattered little man who came hurtling through the swinging doors. It was Andy.

Waving his arms in the air, Andy shouted: "Hello, boss, how's the printing business?" And he was off like a shot, never more to be seen by his old pal whose great desire in life was to help him.

XXIX

THE STANDING MIRACLE

EVERY age has its fads.

And fads are illuminating—they reveal the spirit of the age. Harmless, many of them, in themselves, they call for no concern other than studying them to find the spirit which prompts them. But, for the man who would intelligently address himself to his generation, it is vitally necessary that he should know and understand its spirit.

Of the prominent fads of the present age, one is a means of diversion commonly known as "debunking." It is a game thus named and played by the self-termed *intelligentsia.* The game, it seems, consists of seizing upon all those things which simple folk revere and hold sacred, and stripping them of the "bunk" which allegedly surrounds them in thick layers. It is an amusing game, played by the *intelligentsia* with great zest and much laughter.

This little sport of the *intelligentsia* is revealing. It interprets the spirit of this generation to be that of mocking unbelief. The present-day unbeliever does not usually mount a soap-box to perspire and denounce. He just laughs. He tries to debunk. Having failed to win a verdict against Christianity, he would laugh it out of court. Having failed to be logical, he would be humorous.

Nearly all of our most revered traditions have been subjected to the merriment of the debunkers. Our national heroes, our established customs, our moral codes, our civilization—all have been pronounced properly debunked.

Religion in its turn has not been forgotten. Gales of laughter peal out from the *intelligentsia* as they attack the Bible, with its scientific "inaccuracies," its miracles, its heaven, its hell. Nothing is sacred. No ground is holy. What the *intelligentsia* cannot understand—they simply debunk.

Some things are more easily debunked, however, than others. Christianity as a creed may be subjected to argument. Even the Biblical record of wonderful things may be challenged. But when Christianity is met with in the form of a human, living, walking, breathing miracle . . . well, it is just a trifle harder to dispose of or even to debunk.

So here—in the transformed, "twice-born" Henry F. Milans—is meat for the *intelligentsia.* Let them "debunk" him, if they can.

* * *

It must not be inferred from the foregoing that all disbelievers in miracles are of the *intelligentsia* . . . bolstering up their unbelief with jesting, and unwilling to accept any evidence, however true. There are many serious-minded men and women who are assailed with honest doubts on the subject. They believe, and believe profoundly, that though it is possible to change the form of life, it is impossible to change the spirit; that though the stature may be transformed the moral structure is unreformable. Instincts, they believe, always will stay the same.

Those belonging to this class have not arrived willy-nilly at this stage of their unbelief. They have reasons for their lack of credence. They have looked closely at all human agencies and have found them riddled with limitations. They have noted that there is a rope's end to science, that medicine is faced with impossibilities, that psychology is often stumped, and that philosophy and metaphysics have borderlands beyond which no one can venture with certainty.

Their mistake has been that, in their serious search for truth they have overlooked the one who said, "I am the . . . Truth." In the midst of their search, Christianity has all the while been calling to them, "Do you find things impossible? Things incurable? Let me try. I can do it!"

But their ears are holden, and they hear not. Had they gone to Him, He would have pointed them to such incontrovertible evidence of His miracle-working power as that personified in Henry F. Milans.

* * *

So certain was one acquaintance of Milans that his religion could not long stave off a return to liquor and a consequent journey to a drunkard's early grave, that he was willing to gamble on it. Here is how he gambled.

Shortly before his conversion, Milans had sold his insurance policy together with everything else he possessed. It was a twenty-year endowment policy which was about to lapse because of non-payment of the premiums. The purchaser took it over with cold-blooded glee, feeling certain that in a few months he would be the recipient of a large sum of money from the insurance company. As the premiums came due, he met them with the calm self-assurance of a Wall Street broker who has put his money into "a sure thing." And even after Milans' conversion, this "investor" patiently paid the premiums, anticipating that his collecting day was not far off.

But the months went by and grew into years. Milans' health steadily improved; day by day he resembled less and less a candidate for the cemetery. And still the man paid and paid. Whenever, during the succeeding years, Milans handed over to him correspondence which he had received from the insurance company, or forwarded the notices that the premiums were due, the man was anything but an embodiment of mirth. He seemed to think Milans had treated him shabbily in not dying, as he had expected him to, within a reasonable time after the investment was made. His mistake was in refusing to recognize the fact that Milans had been "born again." Even an "incurable's" insurance is not a safe investment when God is near.

* * *

One phase of the miracle wrought in Henry F. Milans that causes general wonderment is his perfect physical condition. Consider that he is now seventy years of age, and that more than half of his life was spent in violating every fibre of his physical being. Remember that the habits in which he indulged, usually sufficient to wreck any man's physique in a short time, were begun and persisted in during and from early youth, the period of formation and development. Yet a leading physician of New York City, having thoroughly examined him, declares Milans at the age of three-score and ten to be perfectly sound in body! Is it not such a Power, which not only saves the soul but renews the body from the ravages of years of sinful indulgence, to be wondered at?

Said a prominent Rotarian (a Protestant Episcopal Divine) of Springfield, Massachusetts, after hearing Milans address his club, "Mr. Milans, if I were not convinced that you are now indeed a splendid Christian gentleman, I'd believe that you are the world's most colossal liar!" An odd, but sincere compliment.

It is admitted that such a story as told in this book is hard to believe. Knowing Milans as he is today, and regarding his well-dressed and imposing figure, one would never for a moment suspect that he had slept in parks and dead-houses, and had been vermin-covered without and demon-possessed within.

But he still lives and his life is open to investigation. And investigation will reveal the fact that after two decades of testing, *the miracle still stands.*

For the benefit of those who insist that conversion is simply a result of sub-conscious mentation or extraordinary emotional excitement, and is only temporary at the best, one cannot too strongly stress this fact of the *abiding* miracle.

* * *

The more one thinks about Henry F. Milans the more one stands bewildered before the tremendous power of God. Conversion did not only give him a mastery of his appetites; it changed them! Consider the power of the habits that had for so many years ruled his body—that body which had relied for its strength and even for its food on alcohol. Consider the fact that his very nature loved whiskey more than life, and demanded it more than meat. Take note of the opinions of physicians and specialists who, by every right of the knowledge of their profession, proclaimed him to be incurable. Reason with the psychologists as to the utter inability of any human force to overcome the depth of his mental grooves, fashioned throughout thirty-five years of heavy drinking.

Then lay alongside that reasoning his simple statement that these appetites are *gone* completely—never to return since that night when he knelt, a bum, at the penitent-form in The Salvation Army meeting. Listen carefully as he says, "If I ever again become a drunkard, *I shall have to learn all over again!*" Now watch him as he devotes his every leisure hour to winning other men, and remember that this work is not required of him; he is not paid for it; he does it out of love.

Then if you are able idly to dismiss this miracle or attribute it to any other power than God's, it is hardly likely that any evidence of revealed religion will ever convince you.

* * *

Only once in the many years of his Christian life has Milans listened to a temptation to go back. And in that instance he was delivered from the snare by an interference that was nothing short of Divine.

It was during one of the Unusual Woman's long stays in the hospital. He was lonely and discouraged as he walked home one night from the hospital. The temptation which came to him was not due to the promptings of an appetite; his appetite had gone, definitely, once and for all. The temptation was to yield to discouragement . . . to know again the comforting conviviality of bar companionship. Just to forget for a night his care and worry.

He was alone. No eye was watching him but the eye of God. There was no one to account to for his time. Why should he not go downtown, buy liquor, gamble, and go in for a time of burden's banishment?

Then, as he paused in indecision, there came deliverance. He was near the Fort Washington Presbyterian Church. Suddenly, from an eminence above the church, there came a brilliant flash of light. His eyes turned upward, startled. Silhouetted against the dark sky was a blazing cross.

He took but a look at the shining cross. The temptation vanished.

Since that experience he has often read with a new and personal affection the promise, "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him."

The enemy came, and came mightily. But a standard was lifted up against him. It was the standard of the Cross . . . the banner of the Crucified One.

XXX

TWILIGHT PEACE

THE closing chapter of this book is not the final chapter in the life of Henry F. Milans.

The book of his mortality is still open. Doubtless many more chapters, recording stories of his continued service, will be added before God sees fit to close the volume. Though, at the time of writing, his years have spanned the time usually allotted to man, his energies and ambitions for the saving of men still burn with unabated ardour. It may be taken for granted that as long as there remains with him sufficient strength to speak and power to wield his pen, Henry F. Milans will pursue, with loving tenderness, the hearts of men who have failed.

This chapter, like his whole story since conversion, shall be a record of service. If a longer caption were given, it might read: "A Bit of Personal Work. . . . With a Romantic Ending."

* * *

Several years ago Commissioner McIntyre arranged for a Salvation Army demonstration in three of the largest churches of Hartford, Connecticut. Several prominent converts, of whom Milans was one, took part as trophies of Salvation Army work.

Milans himself spoke in the Central Baptist church, and after his talk he announced to the audience that he would be pleased to be of service to any one who might need him, adding that possibly there were some in the congregation who had wandering friends in New York City, in whose vastness so many gather to hide their failure. In that case, if he were advised of the circumstances, he would be glad to hunt them up and endeavour to lead them to Christ. He left his address with the pastor.

His offer reached the ears of a woman who was carrying a heavy burden. She was a prominent member of Central Church. Obtaining his address from her pastor, she wrote to Milans. Her letter told in detail the following story:

In the city of Hartford a sister and brother grew up together, loving one another with unusual devotion. The boy came to be a brilliant young man, efficient and capable as a certified public accountant. But early in life he began to drink immoderately, in time breaking his sister's heart and heaping additional burdens on their aged father's back.

God and the sister alone knew what sacrifices she made in the effort to save her brother. Early in life she had to take the place left vacant by a sainted mother. And when drink had got a firm hold on him, bankrupting him financially and spiritually, she spent a personal inheritance in helping him out of one financial difficulty after another. She became the buffer between him and the angry father. There were times when she left her own home to care for him elsewhere. She did what nobody else in the world would or could do; she loved him, helped him, hoped for him, prayed for him until both she and he had passed the half-century mark.

One day the brother bade her good-bye, and taking money that she had somehow raised for him, went to

New York City with high hopes and extravagant promises. For six years he was silent as to his exact whereabouts or his accomplishments, good or bad.

Then his aged father received a letter telling him that his wayward son was ill, suffering terribly and was without either friends or means. The sister wanted to go to him at once, but she was ill herself and had the additional responsibility of caring for her father. There was but one thing left to do. She appealed to the estranged father for funds to obtain for his son the needed care and medical treatment.

At this point, assailed by heartache at her brother's need, she heard the offer of this man who had spoken so kindly in her church. Would it be asking too much of Mr. Milans to get him to seek out her brother and be a friend to him?

On the afternoon of the day that Milans received her letter, he located the brother in a cheap lodging house on Seventh Avenue, New York City. He was deeply moved at the sight of suffering which met him. An infection in the jaw had made necessary the removal of the left jawbone. His face and neck were swathed in bandages. He could swallow only liquid nourishment and could scarcely talk above a whisper.

What suffering, what loneliness, what punishment!

After promising that he would call to see the suffering man as often as possible, Milans sent immediate word to the troubled sister—that he had located her brother and would try to be the very best friend to him that he had ever known.

But the infection had gone too far. In spite of the best treatment money could buy, one side of his face was gradually being eaten away. Soon he could no longer speak; he had to write what he wanted to say. In the meantime, advised of his son's pitiable condition, the father had relented and had sent money for his care.

Milans gave the brother all that he had to give . . . his heart and his love. When unable to visit him in person, he wrote to him, and his letters gently pointed the doomed man to the God who had saved Milans—one of his own kind.

One Sunday afternoon, as he was visiting him in a private hospital on Washington Square, Milans broke down and wept at his awful plight. Seeing this, the stricken man smoothed his hand gently, and then wrote on his pad:

"Don't worry. It's going to be all right. But I could not bear it much longer if I were not able to reach Him for strength."

When he read the written testimony, Milans buried his face in the pillow, and sobbed out his gratitude to God for having found the man's heart.

The man, now a Christian, became anxious to recover. He wanted to get out to help save other drunkards. "When I get well," he wrote to Milans, "you and I will go together and help in the work. I want to get well more than ever now."

But he sank rapidly. One day his sister came and took him home to Hartford, and he died in her arms.

When he was gone, she found among his few treasured effects all the letters which Milans had written him. He had saved even the little bits of written conversation between them, somehow managing to secrete them on his person even when in the hospital.

A year passed, and Milans supposed that this experience, one of the most beautiful of his Christian life, was closed.

Then, while on another week-end campaign for Commissioner McIntyre in the neighborhood of Hartford, he had his first meeting with the sister, who related to him the story of her brother's peaceful passing. She was warm in her expressions of gratitude for the friendship he had shown her brother.

The man's death left in the family only the aged father and the sister. The father became feeble and later fell ill with a heart ailment that threatened to take him off suddenly. The father was a well-known resident of Hartford. He was a churchman but had become indifferent and lax in things spiritual. Milans was asked to visit him.

The old father listened eagerly to Milans' story of the man's last days and the friendship that had existed between him and Milans. Down deep in his heart, the father mourned for the son who had sinned so grievously, and now his eyes were filled with tears . . . a sight that nobody could recall ever witnessing before.

"He asked God's forgiveness," Milans told the father. "The mistakes of his life were forgiven months before he died, and now he's gone to Heaven to await *your* coming."

Milans made subsequent visits to the old father whenever he found himself in the neighbourhood on some Salvation Army mission, and wrote him such letters as he had never before received. Quietly and gradually the father's disposition softened. His profanity and ill-temper ceased. He became gentle and lovable. An old Bible that he had carried with him all through the Civil War now appeared on a little table near his bedside. The Sun of Righteousness was beginning to shine in the old heart in which the physical sun was rapidly going down.

He was an ardent son of the Grand Army, was this old man of eighty-four years. And when, in 1926, a

G. A. R. Reunion was announced at Des Moines, Iowa, he determined to be in attendance. His daughter was frantic at the idea of her feeble father attempting such a long journey, and again appealed to Milans. The latter met him at the Grand Central Station in New York and endeavoured to dissuade him from his plan, but finding this impossible, he helped him to his train in Jersey City, made him as comfortable as possible on the sleeper, then bade him good-bye.

In a few days the daughter received telegraphic word that her father had died. He had arrived in Des Moines, marched again with his dear old pals of the thinning ranks, and had then retired in happy spirits at the home of his son—and awoke in Heaven.

Funeral arrangements for the father required Milans' presence again in Hartford, where he spent a week of his summer's vacation in seeing that the man who had slipped off so quietly to go to his waiting boy in Heaven was buried as he had wished. Clothed in the uniform he had loved so well, he was laid away by his fellow veterans with all the honour due an old soldier.

Milans made still another trip to Hartford when he attended the removal of the body of the wife and mother to a grave beside that of her husband. Then, at the side of his parents Milans laid the body of the boy who had been redeemed.

This last task done, both Milans and the sister who was now alone in the world, began to realize that the companionship between them, cemented by a common desire to serve, was taking on an aspect of something more than friendship. Too busy heretofore to notice its growth, they now sensed the presence of that kind of admiration and respect for one another that is stronger even than the passion of young love.

Sensibly, and with the frankness of maturity, they discussed the future. Both were alone in the world. Both had discharged their particular duty in regard to their loved ones. Separate they would be lonely. Together they could be mutually helpful. Why should they not love and care for one another until their end should come?

And so the two who had stood side by side in trouble and sorrow were married one evening in that same church in Hartford and by that same pastor from whose pulpit Milans had told the story of God's power to save to the uttermost—that story which had prompted the heart-broken sister to send out her appeal to him to find her brother who was sick and alone in a "far country."

Together they had stood to save two souls. Together they were now in the union of two hearts.

In the glow of twilight they returned to the Milans nest. The horizon of their fading lives is serenely peaceful. Old age creeps on apace as together they sit in the little home with the western exposure, and, hand in hand, watch the sun go down, paralleling the tranquil end that shall be the lot of their lives into which the love of a merciful God has entered with power so miraculous and which has meant so much in redeeming Grace.

Was it not said that this volume should end with the story of a service . . . with a romantic ending?

* * *

The Romance of human love—the Drama of success—the pathos of failure—the tragedy of sin—the triumph of God's grace!

That is the story of Henry F. Milans.

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